Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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www.saipantribune.com | **WEDNESDAY** FEBRUARY 17, 2021 | www.facebook.com/saipantribune

Igitol sees a need to amend many election laws. PAGE 3
OAG wants inmate's suit vs DOC dismissed. PAGE 5

75¢

SCREENING ZONE NEIL FAMA

The construction of the Guma Hustisia COVID-19 Screening Zone is now done. The project was originally intended to be completed in mid-January 2021, but was delayed due to weather conditions and other factors, according to the Commonwealth Judiciary Administrative Office. The Supreme Court on the first floor remains closed momentarily. According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the Superior Court has been using courtrooms 202 and 205 of the Guma Hustisia since mid-January as the court's deadline to fully reopen the courthouse to the public is set for June this year.

CNMI records 135th COVID-19 case

An additional COVID-19 case was reported in the CNMI yesterday, bringing the Commonwealth's total coronavirus cases to 135. The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. said the individual was identified by travel screening and confirmed diagnosis through fifth day testing upon arrival.

See CNMI on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, Feb. 16, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,699	2	7,701
Recovered	7,484	16	7,500
Active	69	2	71
Deaths	130	0	130
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			121,492

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	134	1	135
Traced via Travel Screening	108	1	109
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			181

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI
Saipan: **13,754** • Tinian: **401** • Rota: **363**

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center – Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

Man drowns at Lao Lao Bay

A man drowned last Saturday, Feb. 13, at Lao Lao Bay in Dandan.

Police rescuers tried to revive the victim but he was pronounced dead upon arrival at the Commonwealth Health Center.

According to a Department of Public Safety statement of the incident, DPS received a 911 call reporting an overdue swimmer at about 5:24pm last Saturday, Feb. 13, 2021. Patrol units and medics were dispatched to the area. The Impact rescue boat was also dispatched from the Smiling Cove Marina.

DPS Boating Safety units and medics arrived at the area a few minutes after, as the DPS rescue boat arrived at the southern end of the channel by 6:03pm. At around 6:12pm, the DPS boat came across an unresponsive individual floating face down. The victim was brought onto the vessel where they performed cardio pulmonary resuscitation and rescue breaths. The DPS rescue boat made its way back to Smiling Cove Marina where medics were on standby. At about 6:48pm, the victim was rushed from the Smiling Cove Marina to CHC where Dr. Martin Rorhinger pronounced the victim dead due to drowning at 7:07pm.

In a police interview with the

See MAN on Page 4

Jobless since April last year

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

One of the 180 government employees who remain furloughed and had had no job since April last year says she has been surviving thanks to some side hustle

See JOBLESS on Page 4

CPA eyes requiring vaccinations for employees

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority is looking at requiring all its employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19 as a safety precaution.

According to CPA board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds, CPA wants their approximately 210 employees to be vaccinated to protect them and the community as they are at the front of the line once tourism picks back up in the CNMI.

The CPA board will still have to discuss this further, though. King-Hinds said the board will meet this Friday to discuss the matter and vote on whether or not to require all employees to be vaccinated.

"Our health is our wealth and the only way at this point that we can protect our employees and our community is if we drive home the importance of getting everyone vaccinated. CPA employees, whether they be first responders or administrative support, are at the front-line by virtue of their place of employment. Our airports and the seaports are first points of entry in the CNMI and, as we slowly open up those points of entries, we have a duty to ensure that all our employees are safe and protected," she said.

And the best way to protect the community, according to experts, is by creating herd immunity through community-wide inoculation, King-Hinds said.

However, she understands that there will be some exceptions. "I understand the hesitancy, especially from those who have underlying health issues so there will be exceptions for that," she said.

The Commonwealth Healthcare

See CPA on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

INSIDE

LOCAL

Over 50 parents in the CNMI are recognized as "parent leaders of 2021" last Friday.

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BUSINESS

Salt & Barber Salon and Luxury Treatments aims to provide modern styling for men and women.

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LIFE & STYLE

Michael Jordan is donating $10 million to launch two medical clinics near his hometown.

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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

NMC CREES program leaders accepted into LEAD21 program

Three program leaders from the Northern Marianas College's Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services were recently accepted into the LEAD21, or Leadership Development for the 21st Century: Linking Research, Academics, and Extension program. They competed with applicants from across the land-grant university system for a seat in the upcoming cohort.

The LEAD21 program is intended to meet the future needs for leadership development of faculty, specialists, program and team leaders, research station and center directors, district and regional directors, department heads and chairs, and others in land grant universities' colleges of agricultural, environmental, and human sciences, and United States Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The three accepted are Mike Ogo, Aquaculture and Natural Resources program leader; Tayna Belyeu-Camacho, Family, Community, and Youth Development program leader; and Dr. Virendra Verma, Agriculture Production program leader.

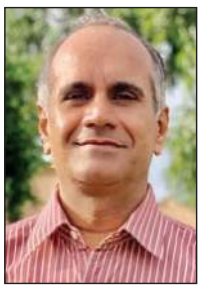
"We are proud of our team members and their selection to this leadership program," said NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico.

"Mike, Tayna, and Virendra continue to demonstrate their commitment to developing themselves personally and professionally so that they can develop other leaders and can continue to enhance the CNMI, region, and nation," NMC CREES interim dean Patricia Coleman said.

LEAD21 program director Dr. Rochelle Sapp congratulated the three on their selection.

Ogo

Belyeu-Camacho


Verma

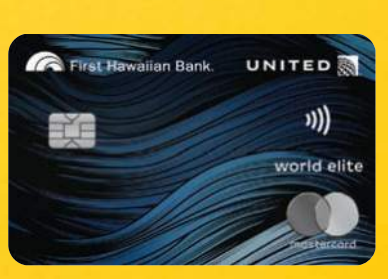
"The LEAD21 board of directors is pleased that you applied for the program and looks forward to your participation," Sapp said in a letter to the program leaders.

The program consists of a one-year core curriculum that includes three sessions and a concurrent individual learning component. A participant's leadership competencies are enhanced using a combination of exposure, information, knowledge and practice.

For more information on NMC-CREES, visit crees.marianas.edu. ***(PR)***

Forget Double.
Get 5 Times
The Miles!

Get rewarded with 5x miles just for making qualifying purchases at grocery stores!*



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*Subject to credit approval. Apply for the personal United Credit Card by 3/31/21 and, if you are approved, earn 20,000 bonus United Miles with $1,500 spend within the first 6 months after account opening AND 5x United MileagePlus Miles per $1 spent on purchases at grocery stores for the first $10,000 spent or until 12/31/21, whichever occurs first. Thereafter, 2x United MileagePlus Miles per $1 spent on purchases at grocery stores. Your account opening date is noted on the upper right corner of your new account letter. You'll continue to earn 2x United MileagePlus Miles per $1 spent on gas, dining (Private Banking Only) and United Airlines tickets purchased through United ticketing channels, and 1x United MileagePlus Mile per $1 spent on all other purchases. United MileagePlus Miles have no cash value except as described in the United Program Agreement. Travel and booking subject to availability. Additional fees and restrictions apply. See the United Program Agreement for more information. First Hawaiian Bank reserves the right to cancel or change the Program at any time without prior notice. Purchases made at department stores, superstores, discount stores, and warehouse clubs are not eligible to receive Earned Reward Miles.

CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION UPDATE

Before you register for vaccination, take our survey!
https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/covid-19/survey/

WHO CAN REGISTER?

PHASE 1a
- Healthcare workers, high-risk first responders, homebound /bedbound patients, & Man Amko' (≥65 years).

PHASE 1b
- Persons 55 years of age and older.
- Workers part of CNMI infrastructure visit vaccinatecnmi.com for a list!

We are here
NO VACCINE
LIMITED SUPPLY PHASE 1
ADDITIONAL SUPPLY PHASE 2
BROAD SUPPLY PHASE 3

HOW DO I REGISTER FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION?
- Register **ONLINE** at **www.vaccinatecnmi.com**
- Register over the **PHONE** by calling **(670) 682-SHOT**/(7468)

CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION SCHEDULE

2/15/2021-2/20/2021

SAIPAN

Monday 2/15 - 8am to 6pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/25

Tuesday 2/16 - 8am to 6pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/26

Wednesday 2/17 - 8am to 6pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/27

Thursday 2/18 - 8am to 6pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/28

Friday 2/19 - 8am to 3pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/29

Saturday 2/20 - 8am to 1pm
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 01/30

NO VACCINATIONS ON SAIPAN FOR SUNDAY, 2/20

LOCATION: CHCC - MCATS tents located across from the Emergency Room.
PARKING: Parking lot is located across the CHCC campus on Navy Hill Road.

*Dose 1 vaccinations are based on availability and depends upon verification of phase status by CHCC. Go online to register at **vaccinatecnmi.com** or call the Vaccinate CNMI Call Center at **(670) 683-SHOT**/7468 to secure a vaccination spot.*

TINIAN

Monday 2/15 - 9am to 3pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 55+

Saturday 2/20 - 9am to 3pm
Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 55+

REGISTRATION WILL CLOSE 2/14 & 2/19 at 7pm

LOCATION: Tinian Health Center

ROTA

Saturday 2/20 - 8am to 3pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b

REGISTRATION WILL CLOSE 2/19 at 7pm

LOCATION: Rota Health Center

What to Bring

1. **Vaccination ID** (Located in confirmation email)
2. **Government Issued ID** (e.g, driver's license or passport)
3. **Employee ID** or latest paystub (Phase 1b only)
4. **Insurance Card** (If applicable)
5. DOSE 2 recipients must also bring their **Vaccination Record Card** (please make your appointment date even if you misplace your card)

VACCINATE CNMI CALL CENTER: **(670) 682-SHOT** / Mon-Sat 8am-8pm & Sunday 8am-1:30pm VACCINATE CNMI WEBSITE: vaccinatecnmi.com @cnmichcc

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
File photo shows Gamsun Project lifeguards posing with coach Emma Perez.

Gamsun Project prepares high school youth for lifeguard certifications

500 Sails is offering free swim classes for high school youth in preparation for lifeguard certification classes.

The classes are held on Sundays this February and March 2021, from 1pm to 2pm, at the Guma Sakman in Susupe. All levels are welcome. Register on site. Bring a water bottle, swim clothes, a towel, and a friend.

The 500 Sails Gamsun Project started two years ago in response to the need for the community's youth to be safe in the water while receiving ongoing swim training. To do that, lifeguards were needed. High school youth were recruited and prepared for the lifeguard certification swim test by coach Emma Perez.

In 2018, 12 students passed the swim test. Of these 12, many started as beginner swimmers in the program. Ten went on to pass the waterfront lifeguard certification class. All participated as either lifeguards or assistant teachers for hundreds of youth in Gamsun Project classes from K-12. Four got jobs as lifeguards in Saipan hotels.

Waterfront lifeguard certification requires that participants pass the following swim test on the first day of class:

- 500-yard (457-meter) swim using front crawl or breaststroke. This is a very big loop around the first tank in the ocean off of the Guma Sakman.
- Two-minute tread using legs only. This can be done with fingers in the air, or tucked under your arms.
- Retrieve a 10-lb dive weight from 7 feet (a little over 2 meters) deep, surface and swim 20 yards (about 18 meters) with the weight, using legs only and exit the pool within 100 seconds.
- Swim 5 yards (about 4.5 meters), submerge and retrieve three dive rings placed five yards apart, resurface, and continue to swim another five yards to complete the skill sequence.

In the past, these tests were given in a combination of open ocean and pool. This series of Sunday classes will help get high school student swim skills up to a level where they can pass this test.

For more information: email eperez @500sails.org, follow 500 Sails at https://www.facebook.com/500 Sails-DolphinClubSaipan, or call Perez at 670-285-4268. ***(PR)***

Igitol sees a need to amend many election laws

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Igitol

Newly appointed Commonwealth Election Commission executive director Kayla Igitol has underscored the need to amend a lot of election laws because of the many challenges happening in the community.

Igitol said in an interview last Friday that the CEC board, she, and the CEC staff will be looking into proposing some amendments to many election laws to fit with the changing times.

This will help CEC be more flexible during this COVID-19 pandemic and in times when typhoons happen during an election period, like what happened when Super Typhoon Yutu happened in October 2018, she said.

"We [must be] flexible to operate with those challenges," she pointed out.

This need to update election laws and regulations was among the issues the CEC commissioners discussed during a meeting last Friday.

Igitol said that they, with the assistance of the board, are going to work on having the laws amended before next year's gubernatorial election.

Then-senator Sixto K. Igisomar (R-Saipan) had introduced two bills that the CEC had supported to mitigate the public health risks due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One bill suspended certain CNMI election laws for the Nov. 3, 2020, general elections, while the other legislation amended the election law to allow a member of the CEC board to participate and vote in an official online meeting. The 21st Legislature passed both bills. Last Sept. 23, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres signed them into laws.

DCRM
SUMMER
INTERNSHIP
COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
The Division of Coastal Resources Management is looking for 15 CNMI-based college students or college-bound high school graduates with an interest in learning more about coral reef and coastal zone management. Our summer interns work 20 hours a week for 10 weeks from June to August and are paid $10.00 per hour.
To be considered, please submit the following documents by email to outreach@dcrm.gov.mp
CNMI EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION
Which can be found at www.cnmiopm.net
COVER LETTER
RESUME/CV
TRANSCRIPTS
Official or Unofficial
TWO (2) LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION
Instructors and/or Employers Only
POLICE CLEARANCE
Within the Last 3 Months
COPY OF VALID PHOTO ID
Driver's License, Passport, etc.
APPLY BY FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 2021
This summer's internship opportunities include:
MARINE MONITORING ◦ EDUCATION & OUTREACH
SHORELINE MONITORING ◦ SPECIAL AREA MANAGEMENT ◦ REGULATORY COMPLIANCE
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ◦ WATERSHED MANAGEMENT
For more information, contact DCRM at 664-8300 or visit our website at WWW.DCRM.GOV.MP

AmeriCorps members, volunteers paint mural at WSR to honor MLK

With the help of other student volunteers, four Marianas High School students who are members of the AmeriCorps program and assigned at the William S. Reyes Elementary School have painted a mural to honor civil rights icon Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on the wall at one of WSR classroom buildings in Chalan Kanoa.

The four MHS students who are AmeriCorps members are Grace Vendiola, Lance Christian A. de la Torre, Zandro Mamauag Jr., and Marben Obando.

The four, along with another MHS student, Adrien Ocampo, all worked together and came up with the design of the mural.

Vendiola thanked all the volunteers who showed up.

De la Torre said Martin Luther King Jr. was a great man who deserves more recognition for all he's done. He hopes other students will be inspired to help out the community.

"I also want to give thanks to our awesome site supervisors, Ms. Calla and Ms. Chelsea, for all of the help they've given us," he said.

Mamauag said he did it because he wants to give back to the community.

Obando said he appreciates everyone's contribution to the project.

The AmeriCorps students came up with the idea of a mural last November. The mural, which is near the main entrance of WSR, is expected to be fully completed by the end of this month.

Calla Eichenberger and Chelsea Yangirelfel, who are the site supervisors for AmeriCorps at WSR, have been supervising the project.

Eichenberger said the mural is a message about equal access to literacy and education, with Martin Luther King Jr. as the main focus.

"We wanted to honor how [King] stood for equal rights and about being good citizens," she said.

Eichenberger said King fits with the idea behind AmeriCorps, who are volunteers and that they help teach reading to students that are struggling.

Aside from the four MHS students, others who have been assisting the project are some AmeriCorps members from Koblerville Elementary School, and some volunteer students from MHS.

The other volunteers are members of the Saipan Southern High School Interact Club, National Honor Society Saipan Southern High School, MHS Mighty Dolphins, My Wave, WSR student volunteers, and some community members.

Eichenberger said the AmeriCorps had been wanting to do this mural since when they started at the school in November 2020. She said they came up with a solid idea for the project last Nov. 20.

"I just want to shout out for the…high school volunteers that we have. It's wonderful to see high school students being active in their community in volunteering," Eichenberger said. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marianas High School students who are members of the AmeriCorps and assigned at the William S. Reyes Elementary School in Chalan Kanoa pose before a mural about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that they, along with other volunteer students, painted on the wall at WSR. From left are Lance Christian A. de la Torre, Zandro Mamauag Jr., Grace Vendiola, and Marben Obando.

Student members of the AmeriCorps and other volunteer students help paint a mural of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and about equal access to literacy and education at the William S. Reyes Elementary School in Chalan Kanoa. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Student members of the AmeriCorps and other volunteers pose for a group photo before the mural they painted on the wall at the William S. Reyes Elementary School in Chalan Kanoa. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

MAN

From Page 1

caller, she stated that she and the victim got to Lao Lao Bay at around 4:45pm and that she had gone for a 15- to 20-minute swim before returning to shore. She noticed the victim change to his swim shoes and took his mask and snorkel before going in the water. After about 30 minutes she did not see the victim, so she immediately called for police assistance. The police report did not indicate the relationship between the two, nor the age of the victim and other details. ***(PR)***

CPA

From Page 1

Corp. clarified that it's up to an employer if they want to make the vaccination mandatory so employees can return to work, but there are some exemptions.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's COVID-19 guidance states that employers may implement mandatory vaccination polices once a COVID-19 vaccine becomes widely available, but any policy must meet certain requirements under federal anti-discrimination laws. This includes discrimination against employees and job applicants on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age.

In addition, pursuant to the EEOC rule, employers may require employees to get the COVID-19 vaccine before reporting to work but employers must consider accommodations for workers who refuse to get vaccinated due to a medical disability or "sincerely held religious belief."

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, CPA employees will remain furloughed—the term CPA uses to refer to reduced hours—which mean all employees are working on a reduced hour work schedule indefinitely because of the drastic decline following the halt of the tourism industry.

All employees, except for critical employees, remain furloughed in order to avoid a reduction-in-force. An RIF means a position is eliminated with no plans to fill it back up.

Effective last March 29, 2020, all CPA employees were reduced to a 64-hour work schedule.

Back on Feb. 14, the board approved a 72-hour work schedule for all employees, reducing by eight hours the work-hours of employees per pay period.

CPA estimates a total revenue loss at $6,478,735 in 2020 due to flights suspensions.

CNMI

From Page 1

The individual has been safely in quarantine and was moved to the designated isolation area at the Kanoa Resort Alternative Care Site for close monitoring. CHCC also said it has already initiated contact tracing for the most immediate contacts of the new confirmed case, including passengers on the same flight.

Out of the 135 total COVID-19 cases in the CNMI so far, 109 were identified by travel screening while 26 were local transmissions. Of the 109 identified by travel screening, 65 are from the U.S. mainland, 32 from a U.S. territory, and 12 are from a foreign country. There are currently two persons in isolation and the CNMI has had no local transmission for the past 182 days.

In other news, CHCC mourned the passing of Federated States of Micronesia Health Secretary Dr. Livinson Taulung. "We extend our condolences to his family, friends, colleagues, and our brothers and sisters in FSM. CHCC colleagues who had the fortunate opportunity to work with Secretary Taulung consistently returned to Saipan with such great admiration for his steadfast support of FSM building local capacity for all health services," a statement from CHCC read. "We have lost a giant among us, but let us continue to band together to keep going down the pathway of self-reliance we have walked with Secretary Taulung." ***(Saipan Tribune)***

JOBLESS

From Page 1

and with the help of her children, who send her money.

The employee, who asked not to be identified, also questioned the selection process the Office of Personnel Management used in selecting which government employee would be furloughed.

A single mother of six, she said her situation is compounded by the fact that, although her children are all grown up, the youngest is still in college in the U.S. mainland.

"It hurts me when my youngest asks for money to support her studies and I could not give any," said the employee, adding that she would just give excuses so her daughter would not notice that she's hurting and crying.

To survive, she's doing some "side projects" and that she is thankful her other children, who are all in the U.S. mainland, all help her.

The employee acknowledges that her situation is not unique to herself alone, that she was among several employees who've been furloughed and that everybody else, except for five of them, have been called back to work.

She said she has been furloughed since April 2020 and has not heard any word from her superior whether she will get back her job or if she will be among those who will be terminated. The employee said she fails to understand why she was furloughed when she was the one who trained many of her co-workers.

"The Office Of Personnel Management's protocol has not been properly done," she said, hinting that she is consulting a Guam lawyer to explore her legal options. She did not elaborate but when asked why she prefers a lawyer from Guam, the employee said 99% of lawyers in the CNMI are affiliated with the current administration.

When sought for comments, press secretary Kevin Bautista said the government is following reduction-in-force procedures as outlined in the personnel regulations under the NMI Administrative Code and in consultation with the Civil Service Commission, Office of Personnel Management, and the Office of the Attorney General.

Bautista said they have done their part to formally inform the Legislature as well.

He said OPM is working with departments and agencies on the process.

"While this administration has done everything we could to bring back furloughed employees from the initial furlough process last year, we still do not have the local revenue to bring back these 180 employees," he said.

Bautista said the island economy, which is reliant on tourism whether they like it or not, took a major hit last year with the pandemic.

He said the goal remains the same, which is to ensure that they rebuild the economy so that the CNMI can have the revenue necessary to bring these employees back.

Bautista said it's exactly why Gov. Ralph DLG Torres continues to work with the Marianas Visitors Authority on the tourism reopening plan and has asked the Legislature to pass revenue-generating bills.

"Through collective effort, we can rebuild our economy, but it's all hands on deck at this unprecedented point," he said.

Last Tuesday, Torres initiated a reduction-in-force procedures involving 180 government employees that are currently furloughed and will be let go from their jobs permanently.

In his letter to legislative leaders, Torres said the government will need $5,688,239 this fiscal year to recall these 180 employees.

OAG wants inmate's suit vs DOC dismissed

The Office of the Attorney General has told the U.S. District Court for the NMI that an inmate's lawsuit against the Department of Corrections should be dismissed because the DOC did not violate his equal protection rights.

In addition, Price Shoiter's lawsuit lacks jurisdiction and fails to state a claim, according to assistant attorney general Leslie A. Healer's motion to dismiss.

She said that Shoiter, who is serving a 10-year sentence for sexually abusing a 7-year-old girl, did not state that any defendant advised him that he couldn't be medically referred since he is a Chuukese national. In fact, Healer said, it was Shoiter who stated that it was the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc. that advised him that.

Shoiter has not shown evidence of discriminatory intent or that anyone else was denied a referral due to ethnicity, Healer added.

In this lawsuit, Shoiter has accused current and former DOC officials of breaching a settlement agreement approved by the District Court for the NMI, to which he is a participant. The defendants are former Corrections commissioner Vince S. Attao, Corrections directors Gregory Castro and Georgia Cabrera, and current Corrections commissioner Wally Villagomez.

The settlement agreement that's mentioned in Shoiter's lawsuit involved him and 13 other inmates who sued Corrections in June 2018. They alleged that Corrections failed to provide adequate medical care, mental health care, dental care, and eye care to persons in DOC custody. The lawsuit sought remedies such as the development, on DOC's part, of a plan to eliminate the harm the prisoners suffer due to inadequate medical care, mental health care, dental care, and eye care.

Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona dismissed the lawsuit on Aug. 22, 2019, but retained jurisdiction to enforce the terms of the settlement.

In his latest complaint, Shoiter alleged that DOC continues to deny him adequate medical care. Shoiter was 69 years old when he was sentenced in September 2016. He said in July 2019, he was admitted to the hospital due to chest pain. A doctor recommended for him to see a cardiologist, but Shoiter was told that he could not be referred because he is a Chuukese national. ***(Kimberly A. Bautista)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2021

THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR BY NMHC WITH CPD FUNDS.

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, **through the** Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is announcing the availability of an **estimated** $1,323,784.00 in Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. NMHC anticipates receiving an estimated amount of $867,556.00 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); $386,617.00 in Home Investment Partnerships (HOME); and $69,611.00 in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds for Program Year (PY) 2021.

The CDBG funds, authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, may be used for a wide range of community development activities to revitalize neighborhoods, provide affordable housing, expand economic opportunities, and improve community facilities and services. However, use of these funds must meet at least one of the national objectives which include: 1) to benefit low and moderate-income families; 2) to eliminate slum or blight conditions; or 3) to meet other urgent community development needs.

The CDBG program requires a grant recipient to certify that it will minimize displacement of persons as a result of activities assisted with CDBG funds. The CNMI government does not plan on undertaking any activity which will cause displacement of person. In the event of any unforeseen displacement resulting from any CDBG funded activity, the CNMI government will comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, its implementing regulation and applicable local law.

HOME funds may be used to create affordable housing through financing assistance, site acquisition or improvement, and rehabilitating existing residential dwellings as well as providing funds for new construction or purchase of a single-family residential dwelling. Use of HOME funds must benefit low-income families.

ESG funds may be used to rehabilitate or convert to buildings into homeless shelters and for shelter operating expenses, supportive services and homeless prevention **and rapid re-housing** activities. Use of ESG funds must benefit the homeless.

You may access the CPD applications on the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by selecting the "Public Notice/Announcement" menu tab, beginning February 02, 2021.

Applications must be submitted to the NMHC Offices in Garapan, Saipan (Saipan Applicants); NMC Campus, Building A (Tinian Applicants); and Songsong Village, Rota (Rota Applicants) by ***April 30, 2021, no later than 4:30 p.m. Applications submitted after April 30 2021, will not be accepted.***

Additional inquiries, concerning the CPD program, may be directed to Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner at 234-6866 or 234-9447.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Office of the Secretary of Public Works

2nd Floor Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS DPW21-ITB-020

MARPI LANDFILL CELL 2 REHABILITATION

Governor Ralph Dlg. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for **Marpi Landfill Cell 2 Rehabilitation, Saipan** Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after **February 17, 2021** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of One Hundred Fifty Dollars ($150.00) is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Teasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations currently in effect."

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITUES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **March 05, 2021**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **March 16, 2021** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

Prospective bidders should examine and review the invitation for bids with care. If it should appear to a prospective bidder that the performance of the work under the contract or any of the matters relative thereto is not sufficiently described or explained in the invitation for bids, or that any discrepancy exists between different parts of the invitation for bids, or that full intent of the invitation for bids is not clear, then the prospective bidder shall submit a written request for clarification no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening at 4:30 pm to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

The prospective bidder shall examine carefully the site of the proposed work and the invitation for bids before submitting a bid.

The Contracting Officer (CO) may, upon recommendation of the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), issue an addendum notifying all prospective bidders known to have received an invitation for bids, or if issued after the deadline for submission of the notice of intention to bid, to those persons who submitted such notice, of any changes to the invitation for bids. The Department of Public Works will make every reasonable attempt to notify all persons who obtained the invitation for bids from the Technical Services Division by telephone to pick up the addendum or if the CO chooses, the addendum may be mailed or delivered personally or by facsimile machine. If the bid proposal requires the acknowledgment of addenda, the prospective bidder shall indicate the date of each addendum in the space provided. **It shall be the prospective bidder's responsibility to confirm the existence of any addendum by telephoning the COTR at (670) 234-9828 no later than ten (10) Calendar days before the scheduled bid opening.**

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW21-ITB-020"**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Office of the Director of Procurement Services located at the former Emergency Management Office, Ascencion Drive, Building No. 1301, Capitol Hill, Saipan, no later than **9:30 a.m. local time March 23, 2021**. Bidders located outside of the CNMI must fill out the Notice of Intent Form in order to receive this additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bid documents. Notices of Intent form may be submitted to the Director of Procurement Services no later than **9:30 a.m. local time, March 23, 2021**, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to a.magofna@dof.gov.mp. **Note that failure to submit this Notice of Intent Form will be subject to the rejection of bid**. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than March 23, 2021 and the BID documents must be received at the Office of the Director of Procurement Services no later than April 02, 2021. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Office of the Director of Procurement Services, located at the former Emergency Management Office, Ascencion Drive, Building No. 1301, Capitol Hill, Saipan, at **9:30 a.m. local time, April 06, 2021.** However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at **9:30 a.m. local time, on March 23, 2021**.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (**$25,000.00**) a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. **Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashiers check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety requiring approval of the Attorney General must be pre-approved prior to bid submission**. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations **§70-30.3-245**. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00. Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
b) A certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceed the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable assets are only:

1) Cash
2) US Gov't Securities
3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is **Two Hundred Forty (240) calendar days** upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages for delays beyond the established completion date will be assessed at the rate of **Five Hundred (US$500.00)** for each and every day the work is delayed beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ James A. Ada
Secretary of Public Works

/s/ Francisco C. Aguon
Acting Director Division of Procurement Services

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
CUC-RAES-21-010

A&E Design Services for the Agingan Wastewater Treatment Upgrade (S19-068)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms for the Design Services of the Agingan Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade in Agingan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Proposers for this project must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RAES package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal and One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal in a separate envelope must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-RAES-21-010, A&E Design Services for Agingan Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 11, 2021. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.**

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Consultant's preparation of a proposal under the contract. The RAES does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the statement of qualifications under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Consultants are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAES and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 22, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Larry Manacop, CUC Water/Wastewater, Acting Chief Engineer – via email larry.manacop@cucgov.org; Westen Knudsen, Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email westen.knudsen@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Administrative Technician Senior – via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Northern Marianas Humanities Council
Navigating the Human Experience

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
Program Coordinator
Northern Marianas Humanities Council

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council (Council) is looking for a dynamic and enthusiastic team player for the position of Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator coordinates the day-to-day activities of the Northern Marianas Humanities Council's public humanities programs and supports the Executive Director in developing and evaluating those programs. A detailed description of the Program Coordinator's duties and responsibilities may be obtained from the Council's office in Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai or from the Council's website at www.nmhcouncil.org.

Applicants for this position are expected to demonstrate: (1) cultural competencies and inclusiveness in communications and implementing programming and administrative processes; (2) effective at prioritizing and undertaking multiple, diverse activities and programs; (3) flexibility and willingness to respond to stakeholders and special assignments to meet project goals and organizational needs; (4) reflects on program effectiveness and identifies and analyzes potential issues and areas for improvement; (5) works effectively as a team leader, as well as a member of a team in a collaborative environment; (6) displays exceptional organizational skills and attention to detail; and (7) employs effective written and oral communication skills.

Applicants must have an associate's degree from a U.S. accredited institution, and two years of experience in program and event planning, implementation and evaluation. The salary range is from $32,000 to $39,000 depending on qualifications and experience. Benefits are set forth in the Council's Personnel Policy Manual and include vacation leave, sick leave, personal days, health insurance and IRA contributions.

Interested individuals are invited to send an application package including: (1) Letter of Interest; (2) a detailed resume; (3) a recent writing sample (500 words; preferably on a humanities topic); (4) a portfolio of programs coordinated and promotions on social media; (5) Two Letters of Recommendations; and (6) names and addresses of three references to Leo Pangelinan, Executive Director, Northern Marianas Humanities Council, PO Box 506437, Saipan, MP 96950. Complete application packages must be received by Council staff on or before 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 4, 2021. For more information about this employment opportunity please contact Council staff at 235-4785.

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council is an equal opportunity employer.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-018

RELOCATION OF UTILITIES AT ROAD (A-F) AND ROUTE 205/206 TINIAN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Relocation of Utilities at Road A-F and Route 205/206 in Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general relocation of gate valves, water meters, waterlines, fire hydrant assembly and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Department of Defense (USDOD). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USDOD.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **180 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **February 2, 2021 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-21-018, *Relocation of Utilities at Road A-F and Route 205/206 Tinian*"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 25, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) of the total bid price shall accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 09, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Joel Puyat, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Procurement & Supply, Administrative Technician, Senior – via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-017

CNMI STREETLIGHT EFFICIENCY PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of Light Emitting Diode (LED) streetlight luminaires to promote energy and cost saving measures on the power distribution system in Saipan and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded from the United states Department of the Interior (USDOIA).

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-IFB-21-017, CNMI Streetlight Efficiency Project)"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on March 4, 2021** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) of the total bid price shall accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 10, 2021** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Adrian Reyes, CUC Power Division Engineer via email adrian.reyes@cucgov.org; Alfred Palattao, CUC Power Division Engineer via email alfred.palattao@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal if in its sole opinion to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Parent Leadership Month honors 50-plus parents

Over 50 parents in the CNMI are recognized as "parent leaders of 2021" at the proclamation signing of the 17th CNMI Parent Leadership Month at the Kagman Community Center last Friday, Feb. 12. NEIL FAMA

Over 50 parents in the CNMI were recognized as "parent leaders of 2021" at the proclamation signing of the 17th CNMI Parent Leadership Month at the Kagman Community Center last Friday, Feb. 12.

The proclamation, which was read by parent leader Suzie Torres and signed by Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, also marked the 52nd anniversary of Parents Anonymous Inc., the premier family strengthening outlet that's dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

According to the proclamation, meaningful parent leadership occurs "when parents gain the knowledge and skills necessary to function in meaningful leadership roles and present a "Parent Voice" to help shape the direction families, programs and communities take; and that parent leadership is successfully achieved when parents receive the support and training in addition to shared responsibility, expertise and leadership in the planning, implementation, assessment and evaluation of policies, practices, and programs affecting families and communities.

"It takes all of us as a village to raise a child," said parent leader John Oliver DLR Gonzales, who spoke at the event. He recounted his experiences while growing up that "the neighbors were culturally authorized to discipline us. Houses were open, we were able to eat in their homes, they were able to eat at ours. That is what parenting is all about."

Gonzales said he appreciates it when community members—not just relatives—help discipline children "so that they can be responsible, ethical, and moral."

Shortly after the signing of the proclamation, parent leader Julie Camacho led all other parent leader nominees in reciting the "Parent's Pledge." ***(Neil Fama)***

Free virtual session on legal services for elderly

Guam residents interested in learning about legal services for the elderly can attend a free virtual presentation happening at 6pm on Feb. 24, Wednesday, and again at 10am on Feb. 27, Saturday. The event is being presented by the Guam/Micronesia Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program under the University of Guam's School of Health.

The presentation will provide information about the Elder Justice Center, a pilot program of the Public Defender Service Corp. that provides specific civil legal services to eligible senior citizens ages 60 and older, including assistance in arranging wills, living wills, powers of attorney, and guardianship. Participants will learn about the center's scope of services and processes and residents' eligibility for the center's services.

Interested parties may register at the following links:

- 6pm – 7:30pm on Wednesday, Feb. 24: **http://bit.ly/EJC022421**
- 10am – 11:30am on Saturday, Feb. 27: **http://bit.ly/EJC022721**

For more information and for registration assistance, contact (671) 735-2652 or uog.gwep@triton.uog.edu. ***(PR)***

SAIPAN HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
Office of the Mayor
Municipality of Saipan

NOTICE OF REGULAR SHEFA BOARD MEETING

In accordance with 1 CMC § 9901 et seq., as amended, the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance (SHEFA) Board is hereby giving notice of its regular board meeting, to be held on February 18th, 2021 at 9:30 a.m., Office of SHEFA conference room, 2nd Floor, CTC Building, Oleai, Beach Road, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes from January 28, 2021

II. Public Comment (s)

III. Committee Reports
a. Committee on Awards
b. Committee on Appeal/Deferments/Forbearance
c. Committee on Policy and Procedures
d. Committee on Program and Development
e. Committee of Fiscal, Legislative and Community Affairs

IV. Administrator's Report

V. Chairman's Report

VI. Old Business
1. Requirement to start first 2 years within Saipan based institutions
2. Board vacancy/reappointment

VII. New Business
1. Spring 2021 application status
2. College Now (dual enrollment program)

VIII. Executive Session

IX. Miscellaneous Matters

X. Next Meeting

XI. Adjournment

/s/ Oscar M. Babauta, Chairman,
Board of SHEFA Directors

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP21-BECQ/DCRM-041

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 03, 2021 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"CNMI WETLAND DELINEATION TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFTEY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO **THE DCRM PLANNING TEAM** AT planning@dcrm.gov.mp **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS FEBRUARY 19, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PERSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-OGM/CRB-044

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 03, 2021 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) NEW PICK-UP TRUCK 4WD/4-FULL-DOORS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES, COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLES (ROTA BRANCH) UNDER THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARNINGHOUSE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO MR. EPIPHANIO CABRERA, ADMINISTRATOR OF OGM, VIA EMAIL TO epi.cabrera@gov.mp NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS **FEBRUARY 19, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL **NOT** BE ENTERTAINED. QUESTIONS/AMSWERS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL BIDDERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-OGM/CRB-045

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 03, 2021 TIME: 10:30 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF TWO (2) NEW UTILITY SIDE-BY-SIDE VEHICLES DOORS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES, COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLES (ROTA BRANCH) UNDER THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARNINGHOUSE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO MR. EPIPHANIO CABRERA, ADMINISTRATOR OF OGM, VIA EMAIL TO epi.cabrera@gov.mp NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS **FEBRUARY 19, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL **NOT** BE ENTERTAINED. QUESTIONS/AMSWERS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL BIDDERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP21-BECQ/DCRM-043

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 03, 2021 TIME: 09:30 A.M.

"CNMI CORAL NURSERY OUT-PLANTING AND UP-SELLING PROJECT FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

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ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO **MR. ZACHARY WILLIAMS** AT zwilliams@dcrm.gov.mp **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS FEBRUARY 19, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PERSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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IT'S NOT AS IF I SHOUTED "FIRE" IN A CROWDED THEATER...
I MERELY SHOUTED, "FIGHT LIKE HELL" TO AN ARMED, CRAZED MOB OF MY SUPPORTERS...
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EDITORIAL

How bad is the COVID-19 variant problem? We won't know until we test for it

As COVID-19 vaccinations slowly become available to more Americans, variants of the novel coronavirus have started circulating in the United States and elsewhere, making people wonder whether the shots are still worth getting.

The answer to that is yes, more so than ever.

The more freely the virus circulates, the more opportunity it has to mutate, scientists say. The best thing we can do to contain the number of variants is to vaccinate the world, as fully and as quickly as possible, while continuing to limit infections with face coverings and social distancing.

So far, the variants—the three main ones were first found in the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil—appear to be more contagious than the original version. Early tests have indicated that the U.K. strain might be more lethal as well.

Existing vaccines appear to be at least somewhat effective against these variants, but it's still unclear just how effective. And new variants are almost certain to arrive. Creating new vaccines or booster shots to counter these changes are two options. And one of the most tantalizing possibilities that science offers at this point is a pan-coronavirus vaccine that would target parts of the virus that don't mutate rapidly (researchers at UCI Health are among those working on this). That wouldn't just protect against all forms of COVID-19, but against future pandemics involving coronaviruses. For that matter, it also would prevent common colds caused by coronavirus. And it would allow science to avoid a game of Whac-A-Mole with a dangerous and ever-changing threat.

But in the short term, before U.S. health experts can tackle the problem of a mutating virus effectively, they need a much better picture of what's out there already. The nation has done a dismayingly lackluster job sequencing the genomes of the virus samples collected from around the country, which would identify variations in the virus, even though laboratories have been waiting for samples to test. According to Science magazine, this country is sequencing fewer than four samples out of 10,000, compared with Denmark, which has sequenced more than half of positive samples.

An administration official told CNN that sequencing efforts are ramping up, but "we are not where we want to be." You think?

All three of the major variants have now been found in the United States, but it's important to know which variants are circulating where. That's how scientists learn how well existing vaccines protect against them, and it allows public health officials to target lockdowns at the hot spots where

See COVID-19 on Next Page

Keeping troops in Afghanistan makes America safer

By JAMES STAVRIDIS
Bloomberg Opinion

James Stavridis is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is a retired U.S. Navy admiral and former supreme allied commander of NATO, and dean emeritus of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. He is also an operating executive consultant at the Carlyle Group and chairs the board of counselors at McLarty Associates.

Over the four years I led the Afghan war effort as supreme allied commander at NATO, I was lucky to have four superb generals working for me as the in-country commanders of the International Security Force, Afghanistan. Generals Stanley McChrystal, Dave Petraeus, John Allen (a classmate from Annapolis) and Joe Dunford all performed superbly during their one-year assignments in Kabul. All four became household names in the war on global terrorism, and each remains a valued colleague and friend.

I relied on their military advice every day as I reported to the senior civilian leaders of the 28 North Atlantic Treaty Organization nations, from President Barack Obama to German Chancellor Angela Merkel to U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron and many others. The generals had many differences in their backgrounds, approaches, personalities and combat experiences. But they shared one common vision: That our efforts were important to the security of the U.S. and its allies; and that we should therefore remain in Afghanistan until circumstances permitted a "conditions-based" withdrawal.

That phrase, "conditions-based," has been used frequently over the past few years of on-again-off-again negotiations with the Taliban. Led from the U.S. side by special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, these talks have gone further than many would have predicted. The U.S. has been able to draw down its forces steadily for most of the past decade. But the Taliban have not kept their side of the bargain, and violence is increasing in much of the country. Should the U.S. continue to draw down its troops?

Let's do the numbers. In my four years in command, we had more than 150,000 troops spread all over the country, representing not only NATO members but an additional 22 countries as well. In addition to fighting the Taliban, our mission was to train the Afghan security forces—army and police—to take our place on the front lines. We did so successfully, and by the time Obama left office in 2017, U.S. forces had been reduced over 90%, to around 15,000.

During the Donald Trump presidency, the forces continued to decline, as did casualties. We are now down to around 3,000 American troops. And this month we hit a major milestone: There have been no U.S. combat deaths for a full year.

The negotiations have led to an agreement for all U.S. forces to return home by May 1—but only if conditions permit. It is very clear that conditions do not permit a full withdrawal, and it seems unwise to plan on a final exit any time soon. The Afghan Study Group—chartered by Congress, run by the U.S. Institute for Peace, and co-led by Dunford, who was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 2015 to 2019—said as much in its final report issued this week. (My Bloomberg Opinion colleague Meghan O'Sullivan was one of the bipartisan commission's 15 members.)

"Without understating the challenges ahead, the ongoing Afghan peace negotiation presents a unique opportunity to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan," Dunford told me last week. "We should seek to take advantage of this opportunity, but we should do so in a way that secures our national interests, ends the war, and preserves the gains made by the Afghan people over the past few decades."

In other words, we should seek a meaningful conclusion with the right conditions in place before we depart.

In essence, the findings of the study group reinforce the idea of pushing the Taliban to live up to the commitments they have made to reduce violence and not let progress toward a democratic structure of governance collapse. President Ashraf Ghani favors keeping a capable U.S. military presence in country, probably in the range of 5,000 troops. This would permit U.S. forces to continue to provide intelligence and logistic support to the Afghan National Security Forces; ensure protection for the hundreds of U.S. diplomats and aid workers in the country; continue training programs for the ANSF, especially in aviation and special forces; and ensure compliance by the Taliban to the agreements negotiated.

New Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin is a former commander of U.S. Central Command, which includes Afghanistan, so expect a high level of attention and detailed knowledge directed at the force levels in Afghanistan. The Pentagon is conducting a global "force posture study," meaning an analysis

See KEEPING on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

For Trump, no conviction—but a historic repudiation

By JONATHAN BERNSTEIN
Bloomberg Opinion

Jonathan Bernstein is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering politics and policy. He taught political science at the University of Texas at San Antonio and DePauw University and wrote* A Plain Blog About Politics.

Seven Republicans joined every Senate Democrat to convict Donald Trump at his second impeachment trial. That fell 10 votes short of the two-thirds required. But even if 57-43 was not be enough for a conviction, it was a strong bipartisan repudiation.

After all, the main thrust of Trump's defense was not to defend him on the facts, but to argue that a post-presidency conviction was unconstitutional. And while some Republican senators voted against removing him based on that argument, they did not object to the case on its merits.

Indeed, after the vote, Republican leader Mitch McConnell ripped into Trump in a Senate speech, even though he voted "not guilty" based on the constitutional question. He suggested strongly that Trump should be held responsible by the judicial system.

Where does this leave the former president and the Republicans? In a mess, at least for now. Put aside whether they support democracy or not. It's pretty clear that Trump at this point divides Republican party actors, even if he remains wildly popular among many Republican voters.

The shoddy defense that Trump mounted was a direct consequence of that split: Not a single high-profile Republican lawyer was willing to join the defense team, which on Saturday was down to a single personal-injury lawyer delivering campaign-type screeds that may well have cost Trump two or three Republican votes.

That's remarkable. Even Richard Nixon, when he was probably down to one dozen or two dozen Republican defenders in the House and Senate combined, was able to retain competent counsel right up to his resignation and the end of his presidency.

Yet plenty of Republican party officials and activists, and people within the Republican-aligned media, still strongly support Trump, making it difficult for most Republican politicians to fully walk away from him.

Will the failure to convict give future presidents license to do something as disgraceful as what Trump did? On the one hand, as we've seen over the last two years, the Constitution has set an extremely high bar for impeachment and conviction, one that requires an exceptional combination of presidential wrongdoing, partisan context and much more to overcome. Removal isn't quite a dead letter, but it's close.

On the other hand? Trump was unusual in that he often ignored the normal incentives presidents are faced with. As a consequence, he was an unusually unpopular president, lost reelection, and was easily rolled by Congress, the executive branch and even his own White House staff. It's relatively unlikely that most future presidents would be eager to go through an impeachment, lose votes from their own party in both the House and the Senate, and also be blasted by some of those who voted to acquit, even if they were able to escape being booted from office.

One thing that Trump made clear was that nothing in the constitutional system makes presidents respect the U.S. political system and respond to that system's incentives. The consequences for not doing so, while significant—again, Trump lost!—are not definitive enough to force action.

The task for reformers is to find new ways to strengthen the alignment between presidential misdeeds and their consequences. As for the rest of us, we can only hope that the political parties do a better job of weeding out the candidates who might perversely consider the humiliation dealt to Donald Trump during his presidency to be a badge of honor.

Don't quit on the GOP

By RICH LOWRY
King Features Synd., Inc.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

After losing a national election, it's natural that a political party goes through a period of soul-searching and internal turmoil.

The Republican Party, though, has taken it to another level.

President Donald Trump brought most of the GOP along for the ride during his conspiracy-fueled attempt to overturn the election.

His loyalists have been scouring the landscape searching for Republicans to censure or primary for insufficient loyalty to him.

The most famous Republican House freshman mused not too long ago about a space laser starting the 2018 California wildfires.

And Trump has maintained his hold on the party seemingly effortlessly.

This dismaying chapter has led to declarations that the party is doomed or calls to split it up.

A former chair of the Washington state GOP wrote in an op-ed in The Seattle Times urging, as the headline put it, "Let's form a new Republican Party." This prompted a Chris Cillizza item at CNN headlined, "Should Republicans disband the GOP?"

There's been a spate of articles by erstwhile Republicans announcing they are done with the party.

Jonathan Last wrote a piece in The New Republic titled: "The Republican Party is dead. It is the Trump cult now." Washington Post columnist Kathleen Parker declared, "The party isn't doomed; it's dead."

This seems a mite premature about a party that represents roughly half the country and is on the cusp of a majority in the House, tied 50-50 in the Senate, and in control of the governorships in 27 states and both the governorship and state legislature in 22 of those.

If we are going to consider this geographically diverse collection of officeholders—whose careers in many instances pre-date Trump and will outlast him—a mere personality cult, the word "cult" has lost its meaning.

The fortunes of our political parties ebb and flow and their iterations change over time, but they are deeply embedded institutions of our public life.

As Dan McLaughlin, my colleague at National Review, points out, the Republican Party has, since its inception, been a fusion of a classic liberal wing with a more populist, elemental conservatism.

What's different about Trump is that he represents the ascendance of the populist wing after it had long been in a subordinate position in the party. Even he, though, retained key traditional policy priorities of the GOP, from tax cuts and judges to religious liberty and abortion.

That said, the party does need to get beyond Trump, who is a three-time loser now—in the 2018 midterms, in his 2020 reelection campaign, and in the Georgia special elections. In electoral terms, "all the winning" stopped circa November 2016.

It if feels now as though the post-Trump GOP will never arrive, American politics moves quickly. Richard Nixon resigned in 1974, leaving the GOP in utter disarray—and yet Reagan won a landslide six years later. The Tea Party sprang to life from nowhere in 2009 and had disappeared by 2016, subsumed into the Trump phenomenon.

There will inevitably be an overwhelming controversy in the Biden administration or a crisis that moves us beyond the politics of the Trump presidency and the immediate aftermath.

New issues will emerge, and there are plenty of talented, ambitious Republican politicians who think they are better suited to win a presidential election and serve as president than Donald Trump 2.0. The incentives are for them to slipstream behind Trump for now, but that won't always be true.

The temptation to splinter from the GOP might be alluring to elements of both the populists and the Republican traditionalists, but this a dead end.

The Republican Party is the only plausible electoral vehicle for any sort of right-of-center politics in America. It is worth fighting over, and it will be.

That struggle is sure to be toxic and unpredictable—except for the fact that at the end of the day the Grand Old Party will still be standing.

KEEPING

From Page 8

of troop levels in all locations with a high density of American forces: Germany, Japan, South Korea and many other places. Look for it to recommend upping troop strength in Afghanistan to around 5,000, something Central Command has been lobbying for over the past year.

The case for maintaining a small yet strong military presence in Afghanistan is sound, if not popular. The U.S. doesn't want to see the country slip back into the essentially ungoverned state that existed before the 9/11 attacks, conditions that allowed al-Qaida to take hold so strongly and launch the attacks on U.S. soil. Costs have already been reduced enormously by drawing down 95% of the U.S. forces. There are also about 5,000 non-U.S. NATO troops on the ground, more than America's commitment at this point.

The future of those combined forces will be discussed in depth at this month's meeting of NATO defense ministers in Brussels. If the U.S. continues to pull forces out, the other NATO members will follow. The right balance would be about 5,000 U.S. troops and 5,000 allied troops—a credible force that would push the Taliban back to the negotiating table.

Think back on the end of the war in Vietnam—helicopters lifting off the roof of the U.S. embassy compound, a chaotic finale of a long, tragic misadventure. We need to avoid a replay of that in Kabul, not just for the security of Afghanistan, but of America as well.

COVID-19

From Page 8

more dangerous versions are circulating. Up to now, the Biden administration's priority has rightly been on ramping up vaccine production and distribution, but it cannot waste any more time getting the nation up to speed on sequencing.

This is how important genomic sequencing is: No one really knows if the U.K. variant actually originated there. It was discovered there because the country has a robust and coordinated genomic sequencing operation. There could be other variants, originating in this country, that have not been identified because we simply haven't been looking for them.

Using the mRNA technology employed for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which enables vaccines to be developed much faster than traditional methods do, pharmaceutical executives say they could retool existing vaccines to handle one or more variants within six to eight weeks. But that is not a good reason to wait for vaccination. It could be months before new vaccines are available—and no one knows which new variants might be circulating then. Meanwhile, the current mRNA vaccines appear to have at least partial effectiveness against the new strains, preventing mild cases and, like the flu vaccine, easing the effects of serious ones.

The more we vaccinate—and wear masks, keep our distance from others and practice the remaining disease-prevention techniques that have become all too familiar—the more we keep the virus from spreading. The less it spreads, the less opportunity it has to change. But protecting people from new versions of the virus first means knowing what and where those versions are, through a federally coordinated program of genomic sequencing. That should become the next big anti-COVID-19 effort of the Biden administration.

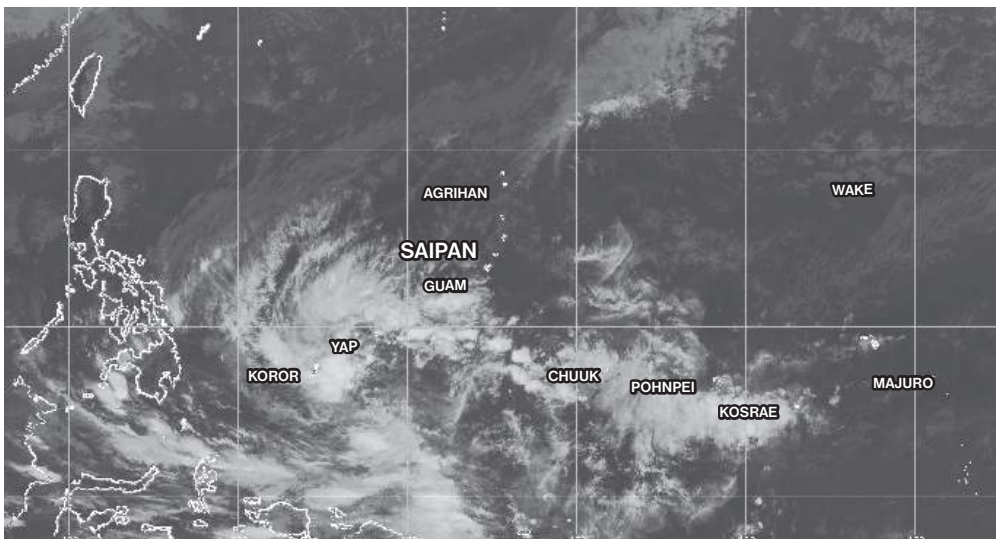
(c) 2021 *The Los Angeles Times*

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
86º 76º	86º 76º	87º 77º	87º 77º	86º 76º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:24 AM, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Fragments of old shear lines are bringing increased low-level clouds to Tinian and Saipan this morning. Copious high clouds are covering the entire region, blowing off from a tropical disturbance southeast of Yap. The buoys reveal combined seas of 6 to 8 feet composed mainly of an east trade-wind swell and a north swell from winter storms that have been moving off Japan.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Showers	85º / 77º
Palau	Thunderstorms	86º / 77º
Yap	Thunderstorms	85º / 78º
Chuuk	Showers	84º / 80º
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	84º / 78º
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	84º / 78º
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85º / 79º

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:40 AM	6:21 PM
Thursday	6:40 AM	6:21 PM
Friday	6:39 AM	6:22 PM
Saturday	6:39 AM	6:22 PM
Sunday	6:38 AM	6:22 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	10:11 AM	10:51 PM	-
Thursday	10:47 AM	11:38 PM	-
Friday	11:25 AM	-	-
Saturday	-	12:27 AM	12:06 PM
Sunday	-	1:18 AM	12:50 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	81º / 64º
Beijing	Sunny	43º / 19º
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	72º / 63º
Honolulu	Thunderstorms	79º / 66º
London	Showers	46º / 45º
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	66º / 47º
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90º / 75º
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	79º / 59º
Miami	Sunny	79º / 71º
New York	Partly Cloudy	51º / 45º
Osaka	Showers	52º / 37º
Paris	Partly Cloudy	45º / 41º
Busan	Cloudy	46º / 34º
Rome	Showers	52º / 34º
Salem	Cloudy	66º / 58º
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	56º / 44º
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	39º / 21º
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	55º / 37º
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	58º / 50º

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
5:04 AM	Low Tide	0.40
11:15 AM	High Tide	1.59
5:58 PM	Low Tide	0.47
11:41 PM	High Tide	1.31

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:40am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Salt & Barber provides premium services

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Upping the game when it comes to the hair and beauty industry in the CNMI, Salt & Barber which opened in December and located along Beach Road in Garapan is set to provide the community services that entails extra care on haircuts and modern styling for both men and women.

Owned and managed by the husband-and-wife team of Jamika and Joe Taijeron, Salt & Barber also goes the extra mile to provide services whether you would like to get hair treatment (there are several options to choose from) and color, get nails done, and book for a relaxing massage to improve physical health.

"We named the salon Salt & Barber because we wanted a little catchy and different name. Salt is an acronym for 'Salon and Luxury Treatment' because we didn't want the service to be just hair… we want to have more treatments that people can get to get extra pampered and extra special," Jamika said.

MARK RABAGO
Salt & Barber Salon and Luxury Treatments is located at the Home of the Beautiful Land Building along Beach Road next to RNV Construction in Garapan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Get the hairstyle and color you need at Salt & Barber.

"This is our first business venture together and something that we have been planning to do for the past two years. We knew we wanted to open a salon that gives us a nice environment, a comfortable vibe… We opened for family and friends in mid-November when we had our first stylist, Curt Ellis, arrive from Mississippi and get acclimated to the local style and the way things are expected in our salon. When our second stylist, Rebecca Tiamanglo from Guam, arrived in mid-December that was when we opened to the public," Jamika added.

When you enter the salon, you will be welcomed by a clean, spacious, and comfortable atmosphere that will make you say "This is legit." On the left is the stylist's row where clients get their hair done. On the left is a corner for nail pampering and at the end of the salon are two rooms reserved for massage treatments where couple's massages are accomodated.

"Jamika and I travel a lot and one of the things that we love to do is get ourselves pampered—get our hair and nails done or massages. Our salon was inspired by the different places we have been to… We renovated a few times, there was a lot of trial and error, and we like what we have achieved so far," said Joe

"We knew that we wanted to do business together. We have four kids that we also wanted also give them some inspiration so they can also think about something for their future. It is hard being husband and wife in any business … but why a salon? It is because we really enjoy the services and thought why not bring something that we love to Saipan and let the rest community enjoy it too," Joe added.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Salt & Barber in-house stylists Rebecca Tiamanglo from Guam and Curt Ellis from Mississippi.

Salt & Barber owners Joe and Jamika Taijeron. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

While most businesses are established for profit, the Taijerons are using Salt & Barber as a medium to discover local talents. "There's a lot of local talent, the young generation out there that we need to tap and nurture. We wanted to give them a place where they can learn and train because Saipan doesn't have a college or educational institution that teach beauty and that's why not a lot of residents here consider that not as a career option," Jamika said.

"We look for people who have passion for hair and beauty. The two stylists we have, Curt and Rebecca, are not only here to offer their services but also to train those people that we selected and interested in this industry. We hired them for their work and ethics and currently, we already started training some people and produce services. We have a total of six people in the team—two hairstylists, three massage therapists, and two trainees that are all from here… we believe in local talents in order to be sustainable," Jamika added.

If it's your first time to walk in to Salt & Barber, expect them listen to your needs and not push what they think looks good on you. "That's why and how people trust us it is because we listen and then we work on it. Our stylists are not only trained to do the work but they hear the clients out and delivers as much a possible… We also give advice… [We] have a lot of high-end products made in the USA that are not cheap but only because we are trying to provide the best products that people can afford that is perfect for maintenance so when they walk out they can take the right shampoo," Joe said.

"We are still adding services to our menu almost every week…Future plans include offering private parties for special occasions like weddings, private parties, etc.… We want to give our clients the best environment and be known for doing a great job always," Joe added.

Salt & Barber is located in the corner of Beach Road and Angaha Street in Garapan. It is open from Monday to Sunday, 11am-8pm, and accepts reservations before or after opening. For more information, call (670) SALT (7258) or look them up on Facebook: Salt&Barber and Instagram: saltandbarber.spn.

Star Marianas promotes Cruz to VP of Operations and Safety

Cruz

Star Marianas Air, Inc. announced today that Jose Cruz has been promoted to the position of vice president of Operations and Safety for the Tinian-based airline. Cruz, a native of Tinian, has served as the manager of the airline's safety department, overseeing the company's safety management system since he joined SMA in 2017.

"I am excited to start this new chapter in my career with Star Marianas Air," Cruz said. "Working with this company has been a sincere pleasure and has allowed me to participate in something that benefits our community."

Cruz also shared the importance the airline plays in the economic development of the three islands in the CNMI. "We've just wrapped up one of our busiest operational weekends since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic with the successful completion of Tinian's 2021 Pika Festival. From Friday the 12th through Sunday the 14th SMA transported over 1,000 passengers, carried nearly 20,000 lbs of cargo, and facilitated an emergency patient transfer from Rota to Saipan." He also added that "We take our responsibility with diligence and intentionality, to provide safe, reliable, and sustainable air transportation to the islands' communities."

Prior to joining SMA, Cruz held key positions for various governmental agencies such as the advisory team for the Office of the Mayor, Tinian Municipal Council, CNMI Department of Commerce, Department of Public Works, Tinian Public Market, Dog Control Program, Third Constitutional Convention, Tinian Casino Gaming Commission, and has served on various boards of directors. He is also an active volunteer member of the community, donating his time and resources to contribute to the beautification of Tinian.

Star Marianas Air is a U.S. Regional Commuter Airline serving the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam. The "Star" in Star Marianas Air comes from the first letter of the islands of Saipan, Tinian, Aguiguan, and Rota. SMA operates a fleet of 14 aircraft and is the only airline based in the CNMI. ***(PR)***

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
31,458.40	3,934.83	14,095.47
+27.70	+18.45	+69.70
0.088%	0.47%	0.50%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	1.2837	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7519	Russian Ruble	72.4202
British Pound	0.7171	Indian Rupee	72.3532	Singapore Dollar	1.3230
Canadian Dollar	1.2620	Japanese Yen	105.5790	South Korean Won	1079.11
Chinese Yuan	6.3640	Malaysian Ringgit	3.9980	Swiss Franc	0.8888
Euro	0.8235	New Zealand Dollar	1.3788	Taiwan Dollar	27.5865
		Philippine Peso	47.2116	Thailand Baht	29.8690

Nation

Officials: 2 dead in Texas as subfreezing cold sweeps US

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—A sprawling blast of winter weather across the U.S. is likely to blame for the deaths of two people in Texas, where an unusually snowy emergency Monday knocked out power for more than four million people, shut down grocery stores and air travel and closed schools ahead of frigid days still to come.

As nightfall threatened to plummet temperatures again into single digits, officials warned that homes still without power would likely not have heat until at least Tuesday, as frustration mounted and the state's electric grid came under growing demand and criticism.

"Things will likely get worse before they get better," said Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo, the top elected official in the county of nearly 5 million people around Houston.

Law enforcement reported two men were found dead along Houston-area roadways. Causes of death were pending, but officials said the subfreezing temperatures were likely to blame.

The toll of the worsening conditions included the delivery of new COVID-19 vaccine shipments, which were expected to be delayed until at least midweek. Massive power outages across Houston included a facility storing 8,000 doses of Moderna vaccine, leaving health officials scrambling to find takers at the same time authorities were pleading for people to stay home.

Temperatures nosedived into the single-digits as far south as San Antonio, and homes that had already been without electricity for hours had no certainty about when the lights and heat would come back on, as the state's overwhelmed power grid began imposing blackouts that are typically only seen in 100-degree Fahrenheit (38-degree Celsius) summers.

The storm was part of a massive system that brought snow, sleet and freezing rain to the southern Plains and was spreading across the Ohio Valley and to the Northeast. The Southwest Power Pool, a group of utilities across 14 states, called for rolling outages because the supply of reserve energy had been exhausted. Some utilities said they were starting blackouts, while others urged customers to reduce power usage.

"We're living through a really historic event going on right now," said Jason Furtado, a professor of meteorology at the University of Oklahoma, pointing to all of Texas under a winter storm warning and the extent of the freezing temperatures.

State officials said surging demand, driven by people trying to keep their homes warm, and cold weather knocking some power stations offline had pushed Texas' system beyond the limits.

"This weather event, it's really unprecedented. We all living here know that," said Dan Woodfin, senior director of system operations at the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. He defended preparations made by grid operators and described the demand on the system as record-setting.

Pelosi says independent commission will examine Capitol riot

WASHINGTON (AP)—House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Monday that Congress will establish an independent, Sept. 11-style commission to look into the deadly insurrection that took place at the U.S. Capitol.

Pelosi said the commission will "investigate and report on the facts and causes relating to the January 6, 2021, domestic terrorist attack upon the United States Capitol Complex … and relating to the interference with the peaceful transfer of power."

In a letter to Democratic colleagues, Pelosi said the House will also put forth supplemental spending to boost security at the Capitol.

After former President Donald Trump's acquittal at his second Senate impeachment trial, bipartisan support appeared to be growing for an independent commission to examine the deadly insurrection.

Investigations into the riot were already planned, with Senate hearings scheduled later this month in the Senate Rules Committee. Pelosi, D-Calif., asked retired Army Lt. Gen. Russel Honoré to lead an immediate review of the Capitol's security process.

In her letter Monday, Pelosi said, "It is clear from his findings and from the impeachment trial that we must get to the truth of how this happened."

She added, "As we prepare for the Commission, it is also clear from General Honoré's interim reporting that we must put forth a supplemental appropriation to provide for the safety of Members and the security of the Capitol."

Lawmakers from both parties, speaking on Sunday's news shows, signaled that even more inquiries were likely. The Senate verdict Saturday, with its 57-43 majority falling 10 votes short of the two-thirds needed to convict Trump, hardly put to rest the debate about the Republican former president's culpability for the Jan. 6 assault.

"There should be a complete investigation about what happened," said Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy, one of seven Republicans who voted to convict Trump. "What was known, who knew it and when they knew, all that, because that builds the basis so this never happens again."

Cassidy said he was "attempting to hold President Trump accountable," and added that as Americans hear all the facts, "more folks will move to where I was." He was censured by his state's party after the vote.

Cuomo: NY should have released care home death data faster

NEW YORK (AP)—Under fire over his management of the coronavirus' lethal path through New York's nursing homes, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Monday the state didn't cover up deaths but should have moved faster to release some information sought by lawmakers, the public and the press.

"All the deaths in the nursing homes and hospitals were always fully, publicly and accurately reported," the Democratic governor said, weeks after the state was forced to acknowledge that its count of nursing home deaths excluded thousands of residents who perished after being taken to hospitals. He explained the matter Monday as a difference of "categorization," with the state counting where deaths occurred and others seeking total deaths of nursing home residents, regardless of the location.

"We should have done a better job of providing as much information as we could as quickly as we could," he said at a virtual news conference. "No excuses: I accept responsibility for that."

Cuomo, who has seen his image as a pandemic-taming leader dented by a series of disclosures involving nursing homes in recent weeks, said he would propose reforms involving nursing homes and hospitals in the upcoming state budget, without giving details.

But he continued to blame a "toxic political environment," and "disinformation" for much of the complaints surrounding his administration's handling of the issue.

The governor's comments didn't satisfy state Assemblyman Ron Kim, a Democrat and outspoken critic of the administration's approach to nursing homes during the pandemic. Kim's uncle died of a presumed case of COVID-19 in a New York nursing home in April.

"I didn't think it was much of an apology," Kim said. "It doesn't pass the smell test."

"But what gets lost, ultimately, is: If they were transparent, if they did disclose everything in real time, we could have had different policies ... and that would have had a different outcome in how we protected our communities."

The head of a major association of New York nursing homes said the state erred by focusing too much on hospitals early in the pandemic and leaving nursing homes "scrambling to safeguard their residents and staff."

"Policymakers and legislators must stop the blame game" and work more closely with nursing homes, said Stephen Hanse, CEO of the New York State Health Facilities Association and New York State Center for Assisted Living.

Commonwealth Zoning Board Meeting
Wednesday, December 9, 2020 | 5:00 PM
Commonwealth Zoning Office | 2nd Floor Joeten Dandan Building
Tel: 234-9661/2 • Fax: 234-9666
www.zoning.gov.mp

SPECIAL MEETING
AGENDA

A. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of 02/03/2021 Zoning Board Meeting minutes
5. Public Comments *(not for items to be discussed in item B. Public Hearings)*

B. Public Hearings:
1. Conditional Use Application #2020-4506 – Marians Hemp Farms is proposing to utilize 5 (Five) Cargo Containers, 2 (Two) 20 foot and 3 (Three) 40 foot, to construct a 1-storey building structure measuring 43'.7" (L) x 208'.10" (W) for its Cannabis Farm Use. This site is located on Lot No. 103 D 06 in the Village of Gualo Rai. This area is zoned as Rural zoning district.

C. New Business
1. Operations Reports (Permitting & Enforcement)

D. Miscellaneous
1. Next Meeting – April 7th
2. Other Matters

E. Adjournment

In an effort to provide public access to this meeting during this pandemic, the Commonwealth Zoning Board will host this meeting via:

Zoom Video Communications
Meeting Link:
https://zoom.us/j/6853007492?pwd=Q0daYlNPMDdXdFlQRTQ4UkhFRjViUT09
Meeting Code: 685 300 7492

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING
for
Marianas Hemp Farms

The Public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board Public Hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Marianas Hemp Farms is proposing to utilize 5 (Five) Cargo Containers, 2 (Two) 20 foot and 3 (Three) 40 foot, to construct a 1-storey building structure measuring 43'.7" (L) x 208'.10" (W) for its Cannabis Farm Use. This use is classified as "Cannabis Farm" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located on Lot No. 103 D 06 in the village of Gualo Rai. This area is zoned as Rural.

A public hearing will be held on:

Date: **March 3, 2021**
Time: **5:00 pm**
Place: **Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center, Susupe, Saipan**

Comments on the proposal may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may be submitted directly to the Zoning Office before 4:30 pm, March 02, 2021. Please send written comments via e-mail to zoningboard@cnmizoning.com. via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or deliver them to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq.) and the Amended Saipan Zoning Law of 2013.

/s/ Tatiana Babauta, Chairwoman

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Gao, Julie Marie S. Petitioner, vs. Gao, Feng Respondent,
FCD-DI CIVIL ACTION NO. 20-0337
SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE NAME RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 503236 CK Saipan, MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950, It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this summons, judgement by default may be taken against you for relief in the complaint.

Dated this 20th day of October, 2020.

/s/ Clerk of Court

Oliver M. Manglona (F0489)
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 7862 SVRB, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 285-3750 | Fax. (670) 234-5749
Attorney for Petitioner Joaquin Vargas Sanchez

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF VICENTE MUNA SANCHEZ, Deceased.
Civil Action No. 21-0053
NOTICE OF HEARING ON VERIFIED PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION AND APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATOR; and NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Judge: Joseph Norita Camacho
Date: March 4, 2021
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Courtroom: Guma' Hustisia, Civic Center

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE VICENTE MUNA SANCHEZ:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Petitioner Joaquin Vargas Sanchez, has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to issue Letters of Administration for the **Estate of Vicente Muna Sanchez, Decedent**. The attorney for Petitioner is **Oliver Manalang Manglona, Attorney at Law, whose address is Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, P.O. Box 7862 SVRB, Saipan, MP 96950**.

The hearing on the Petition for Letters of Administration by **Joaquin Muna Sanchez**, as Petitioner, is scheduled to be heard on March 4, 2021 at 10:00am, at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guma' Hustisia, Civic Center, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing.

Any and all persons, creditors, or entities having claims against the Decedent or his Estate are hereby required by law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within Sixty (60) days of the first publication, or the claim(s) will be barred. A copy of your claim should also be sent to **OLIVER M. MANGLONA, Attorney at Law, at the address herein-above indicated**.

Dated this 12th day of February 2021.

By: /s/
Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk of Court

Asia

Security forces crack down on protesters in Myanmar

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Security forces in Myanmar pointed guns toward anti-coup protesters and attacked them with sticks Monday, seeking to quell the large-scale demonstrations calling for the military junta that seized power this month to reinstate the elected government.

More than 1,000 protesters rallied in front of the Myanmar Economic Bank in Mandalay, the country's second-largest city, when at least 10 trucks full of soldiers and police arrived and immediately started firing slingshots toward the protesters, according to a photographer who witnessed the events.

AP

Engineers hold posters with an image of deposed Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi as they hold an anti-coup protest march in Mandalay, Myanmar Monday, Feb. 15, 2021.

The soldiers and police then attacked the protesters with sticks, and police could be seen aiming long guns into the air amid sounds that resembled gunfire. Local media reported that rubber bullets were fired into the crowd and that a few people were injured. Police also were seen pointing guns toward protesters.

In the capital, Naypyitaw, protesters gathered outside a police station, demanding the release of a group of high school students who were detained while joining anti-coup activities.

One who managed to escape told reporters that the students—thought to range in age from 13 to 16—were demonstrating peacefully when a line of riot police suddenly arrived and began arresting them. It wasn't clear exactly how many students were rounded up, but estimates put the figure at between 20 and 40.

Earlier Monday, Myanmar's military leaders extended their detention of deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi, whose remand was set to expire and whose freedom is a key demand of the crowds of people protesting the Feb. 1 coup.

Suu Kyi will now be remanded until Feb. 17, when she will likely appear in court by videoconference, according to Khin Maung Zaw, a lawyer asked by Suu Kyi's party to represent her. The Nobel laureate remains under house arrest on a minor charge of possessing unregistered imported walkie-talkies.

Suu Kyi's extended detention is likely to further inflame tensions between the military and the protesters who have taken to the streets of cities across the Southeast Asian nation seeking the return of the government they elected.

Protesters gathered across Myanmar on Monday, following a night in which authorities cut the country's internet access and increased the security presence in major cities in a bid to curtail demonstrations.

Thousands of engineers marched in the streets of Mandalay, chanting and holding signs that read, "Free our leader," "Who stands with justice?" and "Stop arresting people illegally at midnight."

PH reopening of theaters, arcades pushed back

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine government's approval of the reopening of many movie theaters, video game arcades and other leisure businesses shut since last year was postponed at least another two weeks after mayors feared it will bring new coronavirus infections.

The easing of restrictions in the capital and other regions under moderate restrictions was planned after Manila was hit by one of the worst pandemic-wrought recessions in the region.

The government also will allow larger crowds inside places of worship in Asia's largest Roman Catholic nation, allowing 50% of their capacity, up from 30%.

Mayors under the Metro Manila Development Authority expressed apprehension over the reopening of cinemas and video game arcades. Philippine officials said mayors and health officials should draw rules to ensure safety amid the easing of quarantine restrictions in more public areas, including museums, libraries, parks and historical sites.

"This is a very problematic proposition. This might bring a surge in our COVID cases," Marikina city Mayor Marcelino Teodoro told ABS-CBN News, adding that mayors in the capital region were not consulted by the national government on the reopening of cinemas.

Teodoro said he would order movie houses to remain shut in his city.

Manila Mayor Isko Moreno told The Associated Press that he and other mayors will meet government officials to discuss the reopening of cinemas, which he welcomed as long as health safeguards are put in place.

The former TV and movie actor said movie house staff should be tested for the virus, and he added that reopening theaters would help encourage movie companies produce films again.

"We want the economy reopened to the maximum possible and in the most responsible way possible," he said by telephone.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said in a televised news briefing that the reopening of movie houses would be postponed from Monday to March 1 in the capital region to allow consultations and more time to craft safety guidelines. Movie houses in regions which have drafted health guidelines could reopen right away, Roque said.

Roque said a government body dealing with the pandemic and mayors "are not engaging in a cockfight." "We agree that the economy should gradually be reopened because more people now are going hungry than those who get sick or die due to COVID."

The Philippines has reported nearly 550,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases, with more than 11,500 deaths, the second highest in Southeast Asia. The government has faced criticisms for failing to immediately secure COVID-19 vaccines despite being a pandemic hotspot.

World

WHO OKs AstraZeneca vaccine for emergency use

TORONTO (AP)—The World Health Organization has granted an emergency authorization to AstraZeneca's coronavirus vaccine, a move that should allow the U.N. agency's partners to ship millions of doses to countries as part of a U.N.-backed program to tame the pandemic.

In a statement Monday, the WHO said it was clearing the AstraZeneca vaccines made by the Serum Institute of India and South Korea's AstraZeneca-SKBio.

The WHO's green light for the AstraZeneca vaccine is only the second one the U.N. health agency has issued after authorizing the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in December. Monday's announcement should trigger the delivery of hundreds of millions of doses to countries that have signed up for the U.N.-backed COVAX effort, which aims to deliver vaccines to the world's most vulnerable people.

"Countries with no access to vaccines to date will finally be able to start vaccinating their health workers and populations at risk," said Dr. Mariângela Simão, the WHO's Assistant-Director General for Access to Medicines and Health Products.

The coronavirus has infected more than 109 million people and killed at least 2.4 million of them. But many countries have not yet started vaccination programs and even rich nations are facing shortages of vaccine doses as manufacturers struggle to ramp up production.

The AstraZeneca vaccine has already been authorized in more than 50 countries, including Britain, India, Argentina and Mexico. It is cheaper and easier to handle than the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, which needs deep-cold storage that is not widespread in many developing nations. Both vaccines require two shots per person, given weeks apart.

Last week, WHO vaccine experts recommended the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine for people over age 18, including in countries that have detected variants of COVID-19.

But that was contrary to the recommendation from the African Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which said countries that had identified a virus variant first seen in South Africa should be "cautious" in their use of the AstraZeneca vaccine, suggesting that other shots be prioritized instead.

The AstraZeneca vaccine forms the bulk of COVAX's stockpile and concerns were recently raised after an early study suggested it might not prevent mild and moderate disease caused by the variant first seen South Africa. Last week, South Africa scaled back its planned rollout of the AstraZeneca vaccine, opting instead to use an unlicensed shot from Johnson & Johnson for its health care workers.

COVAX has already missed its own goal of beginning coronavirus vaccinations in poor countries at the same time that shots were rolled out in rich countries. Numerous developing countries have rushed in recent weeks to sign their own private deals to buy vaccines, unwilling to wait for COVAX.

WHO and its partners, including the vaccines alliance GAVI, have not said which countries will receive the first doses from COVAX. But an initial plan showed a handful of rich countries that have signed multiple private vaccine deals, including Canada, South Korea and New Zealand, are also scheduled to receive early doses from COVAX.

Palestinians say Israel blocks shipment of vaccines to Gaza

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP)—The Palestinian Authority said Monday that Israel was preventing it from sending coronavirus vaccines to the Gaza Strip that are intended for frontline medical workers in the territory controlled by the Islamic militant group Hamas.

Palestinian Health Minister Mai Alkaila said in a statement that Israel bore "full responsibility" for blocking the shipment of 2,000 doses of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine that were acquired by the PA, which governs parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

The PA has said it will share its vaccine supply with Gaza, where the Islamic militant group Hamas seized power from its forces in 2007. The territory, which is home to more than 2 million Palestinians, has yet to receive any vaccines. Authorities there have reported more than 53,000 cases and at least 537 deaths since the start of the pandemic.

Israel and Egypt have imposed a blockade on Gaza since the Hamas takeover. Some Israeli lawmakers have said Israel should only allow in vaccines in return for progress on the release of two captive Israelis and the remains of two Israeli soldiers being held by Hamas.

An Israeli official said Israel has received a request to allow 1,000 Sputnik V doses to be delivered to Gaza that was still being debated late Monday.

"It wasn't blocked. They are still contemplating it," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss high-level deliberations.

In a discussion on Monday in Israel's foreign affairs and defense committee, Chairman Zvi Hauser asked a representative from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's National Security Council for details on the vaccine transfer policy.

Hauser asked if the government "intends to demand the return of bodies and captives or demand that the Red Cross be allowed to visit the captives there, or at least ask for information about them." He also expressed concern that the vaccines would go to Hamas and not medical workers.

The National Security Council official, Roi Binyamini, told the panel that the government had no intention of sharing Israel's own supply of vaccines with Gaza. But he said the government was weighing requests from other parties to allow the PA to deliver its own vaccines to Gaza. He said he expected a decision to be made quickly.

Israel has launched one of the world's most successful vaccination programs, inoculating more than a third of its population of 9.3 million since December.

Rights groups say it has an obligation as an occupying power to share its vaccines with the Palestinians. Israel denies having such an obligation and says its priority is its own citizens. The Palestinian Authority has not publicly requested vaccines from Israel and says it has secured its own supply through the World Health Organization and agreements with drug makers.

Good Housekeeping

Soup and a sandwich
the classic combo becomes so much more with a
warming hit of spice
By JEANMARIE BROWNSON
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

ABEL URIBE/CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS

Spicy broccoli soup with a hot sandwich, prepared and styled by Shannon Kinsella, in her house, Wednesday Jan. 13, 2021.

A quick look back at all the pandemic cooking I've done reveals a penchant for soup and sandwiches. Chiefly because it's easy and economical to keep ingredients for those dishes on hand. Good-quality rolls in the freezer, sliced cheese and deli meats in the fridge. For soups, I rely on a stock of vegetables that store well such as broccoli, parsnips and squash. Dry and tinned beans and tomatoes and some frozen vegetables, such as bell peppers, add variety to my soup-making endeavors.

Hot sandwiches prove magical. Think of the Italian beef, the French croque monsieur, a Rueben or patty melt, a shrimp poor boy. Heck, even a tuna sandwich can soar when served hot under a blanket of melted cheese.

A hot sandwich, individually wrapped and tucked into a 400 degree oven, makes it ideal fare to serve at our socially distanced get-togethers. This year, we move the cars out of the heated garage, open the big door and gather on folding chairs to visit with friends. Everyone brings their own cooler of beverages and I pass the sandwiches and mugs of steaming hot soup.

The hot and spicy submarine sandwich recipe that follows reminds us of the classic New Orleans-style muffaletta we first enjoyed there at Central Grocery. Layers of deli meats with a spicy olive relish on a crusty round loaf. Memorable, indeed.

At home, we layer nearly all combinations of thinly sliced cheese and fully cooked meats on crusty small sourdough rounds or square, chewy ciabatta buns. I usually include one layer of peppered salami or spicy capicola for texture and piquancy. A quick mix of chopped olives, celery, carrots and vinaigrette re-creates the marinated olive salad that makes the sandwich so distinctive. Use a refrigerated bottled olive spread to save time, if desired.

Grainy mustard and hot chile oil stirred into mayonnaise makes a zesty sandwich spread (or, try the combination on a fish fillet destined for the broiler!). Thinly sliced and rinsed red onion, along with a piece of a roasted, bottled red bell pepper, add flavor and texture to the warmed sandwich.

Broccoli soup does not need gobs of cream or melting cheese to taste good. The recipe that follows simply tastes like highly seasoned broccoli. The broccoli stays bright green when cooked, uncovered, in water. That water, which tastes beautifully of broccoli, forms the base of the soup. For a richer soup, swap out the water with low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth. A puree of most of the cooked broccoli gives the soup body; pieces of cooked broccoli add texture.

To stick with the theme of the sandwiches, I add a small amount of Tony Chachere's Original Creole Seasoning to the boiling broccoli. A quick look online shows us that there are many choices for a Cajun or Creole seasoning blend. I also like Louisiana Fish Fry Cajun Seasoning and McCormick's Perfect Pinch Cajun Seasoning. Read the labels and purchase ones without artificial ingredients. Then taste a little on a spoon so you're heat-aware before you sprinkle with abandon.

Tame the heat in the finished soup with a drizzle of olive oil or cream and some crumbled cheese. Or, swirl in some toasted pistachio or walnut oil for a restaurant-quality flourish. Perfect, even if you are dining in the garage!

HOT AND SPICY SUB SANDWICHES WITH OLIVE RELISH

Prep: 30 minutes
Cook: 15-20 minutes
Makes: 4 hearty sandwiches

- These sandwiches taste great on sourdough rolls, pretzel rolls or everything bagels.
- 1/4 cup simple red wine vinaigrette, see recipe (or best-quality bottled)
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced assorted pitted black and green olives
- 2 to 3 tablespoons minced celery
- 2 to 3 tablespoons minced carrots
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon whole grain Dijon mustard or spicy brown mustard (not yellow mustard)
- 1 to 2 teaspoons hot chile oil or red pepper hot sauce
- 4 ciabatta rolls (total 12 ounces)
- 8 thin slices Black Forest or other smoky ham (total 4 ounces)
- 8 thin slices havarti or provolone cheese (total 4 ounces)
- 12 thin slices peppered salami or hot capicola (total 3 ounces)
- 1/2 small red onion, very thinly sliced, well rinsed
- 1 roasted red bell pepper (bottled is fine), rinsed, sliced into 8 strips
- 8 thin slices roast turkey breast deli meat (total 4 ounces)

1 Mix red wine vinaigrette, olives, celery and carrots in a small dish. (Refrigerate covered up to several days.)

2 Mix mayonnaise, mustard and chile oil in a small dish. (Refrigerate covered up to several days.)

3 Split rolls in half horizontally. Remove some of the bread from the inside of the tops of the rolls. (Save excess bread pieces for another use.) Spread the mayonnaise mixture over the cut side of the bottoms of the rolls.

4 Layer the ham on the bottoms of the rolls. Top with the salami and 1 slice of cheese. Top with red onion, roasted pepper, then the second slice of cheese. Top with turkey.

5 Spoon the olive mixture over the insides of the tops of the rolls being sure to moisten the inside well. Put the tops of the rolls in place. Wrap each sandwich well in a large square of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Refrigerate several hours or overnight.

6 Heat oven to 400 degrees. Put sandwiches (still wrapped in foil) in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake until nicely heated through, 15 to 20 minutes. Serve hot with plenty of napkins.

Simple red wine vinaigrette

Mix 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil, 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar, 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar, 1/2 teaspoon smooth or grainy Dijon mustard, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon thyme and several grinds black pepper in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Shake well. Let stand at room temperature up to 2 days or refrigerate for several weeks.

Nutrition information per serving: 818 calories, 45 g fat, 13 g saturated fat, 91 mg cholesterol, 66 g carbohydrates, 4 g sugar, 31 g protein, 2,014 mg sodium, 0 g fiber

GREEN AND SPICY BROCCOLI SOUP

Prep: 15 minutes
Cook: 10 minutes
Makes: 6 cups, 4 servings

- If desired, replace water with 6 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth for a richer soup. Toasted pistachio or walnut oil tastes great here in place of olive oil or cream.
- 3 broccoli crowns, about 1 pound total, OR 6 cups small broccoli florets (12 to 14 ounces)
- 6 cups water OR low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 1/2 to 1 teaspoon spicy Cajun or Creole seasoning blend (such as Tony Chachere's Original Creole seasoning blend)
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil OR heavy whipping cream
- Crumbled cheese, such as mild goat cheese, feta or farmer's cheese
- Sliced green onions

1 Separate broccoli florets from the stems. Cut florets into bite-size pieces. You should have 4 very full cups. Slice the stems very thinly. You'll have about 2 cups.

2 Heat 6 cups water or broth to a boil in a large saucepan. Add broccoli stems and seasoning blend. Cook uncovered, 2 minutes. Stir in broccoli florets. Continue cooking, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until broccoli is fork-tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Turn off the heat. Scoop out and set aside about 1 cup of the cooking liquid—you'll use this for reheating.

3 Use a slotted spoon to transfer about two-thirds of the broccoli to a blender. (You may need to work in batches depending on the size of your blender.) Add a couple ladles full of the cooking liquid remaining in the pan to the blender. Cover with blender lid and then place a towel over the lid to prevent hot liquid from splashing about. Puree smooth. Return puree to the saucepan with the remaining broccoli and cooking liquid.

4 Reheat soup to a gentle simmer. Add enough of the reserved cooking liquid to give the soup a light cream consistency. Season to taste with salt if needed. Serve in deep bowls or mugs drizzled with oil or cream. Garnish with cheese and onions.

Note: You can use an immersion blender to nearly puree soup. Be sure to leave some pieces of broccoli visible.

Nutrition information per serving: 84 calories, 7 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 4 g carbohydrates, 1 g sugar, 3 g protein, 62 mg sodium, 2 g fiber

Life & Style

Michael Jordan gives $10M for North Carolina health clinics

WILMINGTON, N.C. (AP)—Basketball legend Michael Jordan is donating $10 million to launch two medical clinics in underserved communities near his hometown in North Carolina, a regional health care system announced Monday.

The Novant Health clinics are set to open in early 2022 in New Hanover County along North Carolina's southeastern coast, according to a statement from the system. The gift marks one of the largest ever from the Basketball Hall of Fame athlete, news outlets reported.

Jordan previously gave $7 million to open Michael Jordan Family Clinics in Charlotte in 2019 and 2020. Those clinics have since seen more than 4,500 patients and have administered nearly 1,000 COVID-19 vaccines, Novant Health said.

"I am very proud to once again partner with Novant Health to expand the Family Clinic model to bring better access to critical medical services in my hometown," Jordan said in a statement. "Everyone should have access to quality health care, no matter where they live, or whether or not they have insurance."

Novant said the new clinics would bring services to "more rural and rural-adjacent communities" and to those who are uninsured or underinsured.

Jordan

Jordan grew up in Wilmington before going on to play at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He later played 15 seasons in the NBA, winning six championships with the Chicago Bulls.

"Wilmington holds a special place in my heart and it's truly gratifying to be able to give back to the community that supported me throughout my life," he said.

Hundreds pay respects to actor Cicely Tyson at her viewing

NEW YORK (AP)—People traveled across the country and stood in a block-long line to pay respects to Cicely Tyson at a public viewing Monday.

Hundreds of admirers of the pioneering Black actor lined up outside Harlem's famed Abyssinian Baptist Church on a wintry Monday. Some said they had come from as far as Atlanta or Los Angeles to be there.

Many in the multigenerational crowd held photos of Tyson, who died Jan. 28. The New York-born actor was 96.

Her family said masks and social distancing would be required at the viewing.

Tyson was the first Black woman to have a recurring role in a dramatic television series, the 1963 drama "East Side, West Side."

Her performance as a sharecropper's wife in the 1972 movie "Sounder" cemented her stardom and earned her an Oscar nomination.

People wait on line to attend a public viewing for Cicely Tyson at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in the Harlem neighborhood of New York, Monday, Feb. 15, 2021. AP

She went on to win two Emmy Awards for playing the 110-year-old former slave in the 1974 television drama "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" and another Emmy 20 years later for "Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All."

At age 88, Tyson won a Tony Award for the revival of Horton Foote's "The Trip to Bountiful" in 2013.

President Barack Obama awarded her the Medal of Freedom in 2016.

Royal occasion: Oprah Winfrey to interview Meghan and Harry

NEW YORK (AP)—Prince Harry and Meghan Markle will be speaking with Oprah Winfrey, their first major television interview since quitting royal duties and buying a home last year in the U.S.

The 90-minute "Oprah With Meghan and Harry: A CBS Primetime Special" will air March 7, CBS announced Monday. Winfrey knows the couple well. She attended their wedding in 2018 and lives near them in Montecito, California.

"Winfrey will speak with Meghan, The Duchess of Sussex, in a wide-ranging interview, covering everything from stepping into life as a Royal, marriage, motherhood, philanthropic work to how she is handling life under intense public pressure," according to CBS. "Later, the two are joined by Prince Harry as they speak about their move to the United States and their future hopes and dreams for their expanding family."

On Sunday, a spokesperson for Meghan and Harry confirmed that they were expecting a second child. Their first son, Archie, was born in 2019.

Spanish rapper rejects imprisonment sentence

LLEIDA, Spain (AP)—A rapper in Spain and dozens of his supporters locked themselves inside a university building Monday in the artist's latest attempt to avoid a prison sentence for insulting the country's monarchy and praising terrorism.

The case of Pablo Hasél, 32, has drawn increasing attention in Spain and has been linked to the government's sudden announcement to change a national law that is deemed to curtail freedom of expression. Over 200 artists, including film director Pedro Almodóvar and actor Javier Bardem, signed a petition last week in support of the rapper.

The artist, whose real name is Pablo Rivadulla Duró, is due to serve a reduced sentence from 2018 of nine months in prison for tweets and songs he posted between 2014 and 2016 criticizing Spain's royal family and praising a now-defunct Spanish leftist armed extremist group.

"I won't allow them to tell me what I have to think, feel or say," Hasél told The Associated Press late Monday. "This serves me as an extra stimulus to keep writing the same songs."

Known mostly for his often radical anti-establishment criticism, he has had previous convictions for assault and praising armed extremist groups although he served no time behind bars after a previous 2-year prison term was suspended.

This time his imprisonment seemed imminent. The country's National Court issued an order for his arrest on Monday after a 10-day period for him to enter prison voluntarily expired on Friday.

But the artist said that he wouldn't go without showing resistance and drawing attention to his case. On Monday, accompanied by some 50 supporters, Hasél barricaded himself inside the rectoral building of Lleida University, in the northeastern Catalonia region.

Police need special permission—which has been granted in this case—from academic authorities to enter university buildings, which have been the scene of protests in the past.

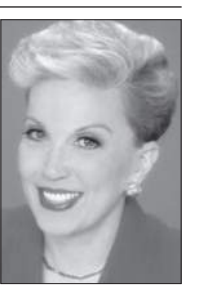
Defiantly, the rapper tweeted: "They'll have to break in to take me and jail me."

Adult daughter is annoyed by her father's playful pats

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR ABBY: I am 20-something years old, and my father still hits my behind sometimes. I feel it is inappropriate, but the last time I complained about it, several years ago, it didn't go over well. It also didn't stop his behavior. What else can I do?

Right now all I can do is try not to place myself in a position where my behind is exposed. I no longer walk in front of him or wear leggings, and I wear oversized jackets to cover it. I'm a modest dresser. I'm not provocative. Did people back in the day normally "playfully" hit their adult daughters' behinds?

INAPPROPRIATE IN IDAHO

DEAR INAPPROPRIATE: No, they did not. Your daddy is acting like a dirty old man. His behavior may seem "playful" to him, but to persist after you asked him not to is not only inappropriate but also somewhat creepy.

You are an adult. No one has a right to hit, swat or put his hands on you regardless of how he claims it's intended. Tell him again that you don't like it and it makes you uncomfortable, and if he persists, he will see far less of his daughter.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I grew up in very conservative households. Since college (where we met) and moving to a large city, we have become more liberal. We have friends of other races with whom we are very close, but both of our families frequently post inflammatory and offensive, racially biased comments on social media. Do we have a duty because of our beliefs and our friends to publicly object to their posts? We have previously discussed our differences with these family members, and we don't see eye to eye.

DIFFERENT NOW IN TEXAS

DEAR DIFFERENT: Because you have already discussed your differences privately with these relatives, feel free to post your reaction to the offensive posts. They won't like you for it, and the rest of the tribe may gang up on you, but you and your husband will be able to look at yourselves in the mirror knowing you spoke aloud your truth.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My wife of nine years has been faking a disability for seven of them. Yes, she was injured. However, I and many others are not convinced she's in chronic pain. She doesn't take her medication, and she functions like she did before her injury. This has had a detrimental effect on my life as well as our sons' because we have to live with her lies. When confronted, she denies it, and so does her family.

STUCK IN THE LIE

DEAR STUCK: Your wife should be examined by a pain management specialist. Whether she's in physical pain, psychological pain or faking can be determined by a medical doctor and possibly a licensed therapist who understands PTSD, depending upon how she was injured. For your sake, your sons' and hers, you owe it to yourselves to find out what the cause is.

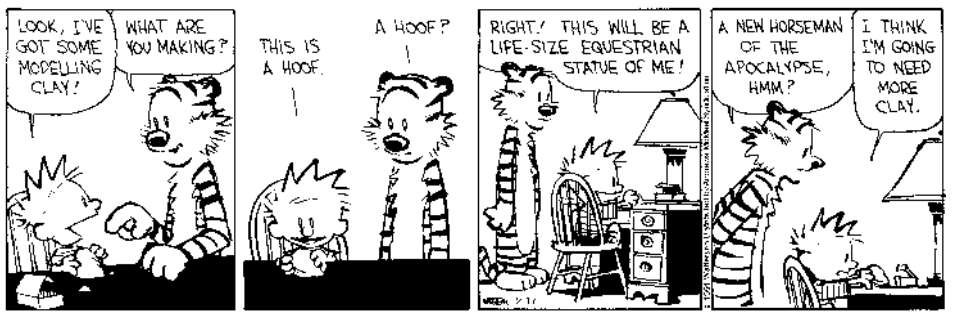
Of course, this suggestion depends on your wife agreeing to the examination. If you are correct in your suspicions, you may want to rethink whether this is how you want to live the rest of your life.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


LOOK, I'VE GOT SOME MODELLING CLAY!
WHAT ARE YOU MAKING?
THIS IS A HOOF.
A HOOF?
RIGHT. THIS WILL BE A LIFE-SIZE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF ME!
A NEW HORSEMAN OF THE APOCALYPSE, HMM?
I THINK I'M GOING TO NEED MORE CLAY.

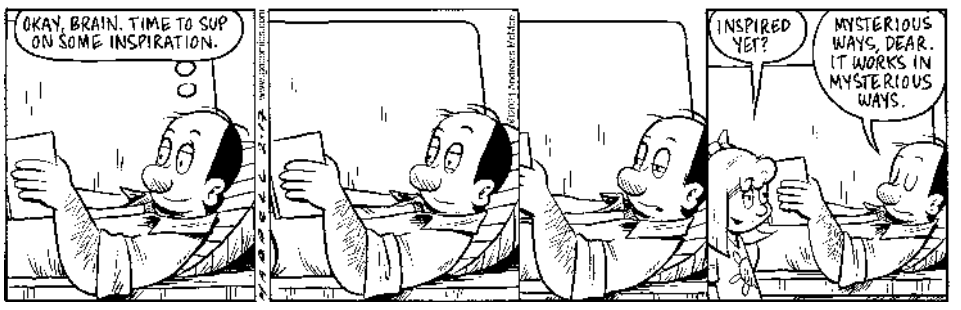
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

"DEAR ASK A DOG, WHAT KINDS OF BOOKS DO DOGS LIKE?"
BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK!
PAPERBACKS. THEY'RE EASIER TO CHEW
JIM DAVIS 2-17

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

HOW MANY OF THOSE CRACKERS ARE YOU GOING TO EAT?
THEY'RE REALLY GOOD. AND SEE - ONLY 500 CALORIES IN A BOX.
IT SAYS, "PER SERVING." I'M GOING TO ASSUME THAT'S A TYPO.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

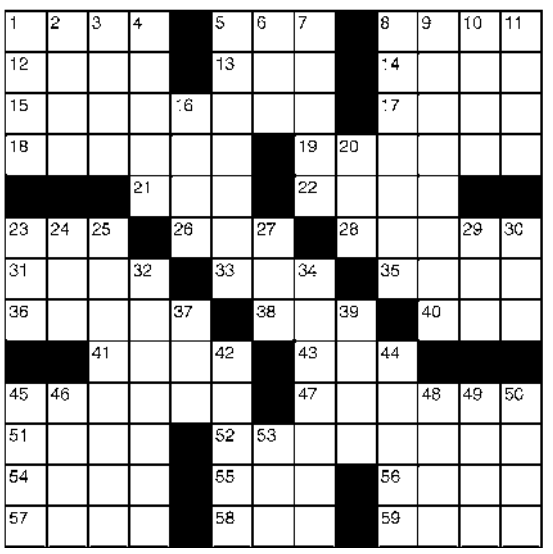
ACROSS
1 Calico's call
5 Droop
8 May honorees
12 "Mamma Mia" group
13 Thanks-giving dessert
14 Ellipse
15 Pots and pans and such
17 Ward of "Once and Again"
18 Derisive looks
19 Know-it-all
21 Venus, to Serena
22 Guitarist Clapton
23 Have a bug
26 B'way show purchase
28 Computer symbols
31 Film genre
33 Guffaw
35 Type
36 Jukebox picks
38 Delaware Water —
40 Diane's role in "The Godfather"
41 New newts
43 Estuary
45 Disqualify (oneself)
47 Capers
51 Sleep like —
52 Julia Child volume
54 Drifting ice
55 "For shame!"
56 Lawyer (Abbr.)
57 Seize
58 "Glee" character — Sylvester
59 Use a stun gun

DOWN
1 Apple computers
2 Black, in verse
3 Bassoon's kin
4 Comes to
5 Russian chess champion Boris
6 Melody
7 Gaggle members
8 Inlaid tile designs
9 Make mushy, as pasta
10 Beer ingredient
11 Do in
16 Legal document
20 Hosp. scan
23 Busy insect
24 Chit
25 Restaurant kitchen worker
27 Towboat
29 Big D.C. lobby
30 Pigs' digs
32 Asylum seeker, perhaps
34 Bar sing-along
37 Rds.
39 Flamingo's hue
42 Factions
44 Facing the pitcher
45 Huck's transport
46 Big name in scat
48 Greek vowel
49 Barracks beds
50 Terrier type
53 Buckeyes' sch.

Solution time: 23 mins.

G	C	B	I		M	L	I		T	I	K	I
O	H	A	N		E	A	R		E	P	I	C
I	A	L	K	B	A	C	K		D	O	_	E
C	L	D		A	N	Y		A	D	D	_	E
			T	N	T		S	H	Y			
L	I	B	Y	A		T	R	I	B	U	T	E
A	F	A	R		T	A	I		E	R	A	S
M	I	N	A	F	C	T		R	A	N	G	E
			B	R	A		F	U	R			
D	I	V	A	S		P	I	G		A	D	A
I	R	O	N		T	R	A	S	H	B	A	G
B	A	L	K		R	A	T		R	E	N	O
S	S	T	S		E	M	S		S	T	A	G

Yesterday's answer 2-17



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Ed Sheeran, 30; Joseph Gordon-Levitt, 40; Billie Joe Armstrong, 49; Denise Richards, 50.

Happy Birthday: Take your time. Consider your objective and what will make your life easier. Anger won't solve problems or satisfy your needs. Listen attentively, and go about your business. The less fuss you make this year, the more you will accomplish. Discipline and hard work will pay off, and kindness and compassion will fetch the same in return. Don't give up; get moving. Your numbers are 7, 13, 21, 25, 29, 36, 47.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Pay attention to what everyone is doing. Connect with people who have something to offer or share. Set up interviews or meetings. Don't give in to uncertainty. Ask questions, be direct and research enough to eliminate waffling. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Confusion will set in when faced with a task you don't enjoy or aren't prepared to handle efficiently. Be honest regarding your capabilities; ask for assistance if necessary. Honesty is the best policy when it comes to protecting your reputation. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* You'll attract jealous competitors. Take a secretive approach regarding what you know, how you will handle your responsibilities and what your likes and dislikes happen to be. Leave no room for error or criticism. Self-improvement is favored. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Don't count on others or trust what you hear. Follow a path that offers insight into something you want to do or try. Invest more time and energy into something you enjoy and people who are well-connected. Focus on getting ahead. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Refuse to let emotional differences stand between you and what you are trying to achieve. Look for new opportunities that will allow you to sidestep any obstacle that gets in your way. A romantic attraction will have strings attached. Proceed with caution. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* You'll pick up information, master skills and gain insight into pending situations if you are receptive to what others do or say. Don't share personal information with peers or colleagues. Someone will offer exaggerated details. Get what you want in writing. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Keep your money in a safe place. Avoid joint ventures or spending on luxury items. When it comes to money, a tight-fisted attitude is your safest bet. A good fitness routine and a healthy lifestyle are in your best interest. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Get problems out in the open. You cannot fix something if you ignore what's happening. Be honest about the way you feel and what you want to do. Happiness is a perk of doing what's right and best for you. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Put your cash to work for you; don't squander it on something you don't need. Stick to a plan that will help you be the best you can be. Focus on health, fitness and moderation, and you will avoid health risks. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Make changes that will bring you closer to the people you love. Don't feel you have to pay for others' mistakes or debts. Offer facts, suggestions and emotional support. A physical change at home will improve your living space. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Adjust to inevitable changes, and carry on with business. The more you wallow over things you cannot control, the less you'll accomplish. Pour your energy into ideas and plans. Finding the best way to achieve your goal will pay off. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Align yourself with people who share common interests and beliefs. Discuss your plans; take heed of the input you receive. A chance to make a positive change to the way you earn or handle your cash looks promising. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are changeable, perplexing and stubborn. You are trendy and assertive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			2					
		8		7				
	7				6			
	6	3	5	8	7			
		6		1				
	4				5			
	7					2		
9								8
	8	5	1	7	9	4	3	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/17

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

6	9	5	4	3	8	1	7	2
3	1	8	6	2	7	5	4	9
7	4	2	5	9	1	6	3	8
8	6	4	7	5	9	3	2	1
5	2	3	8	1	4	7	9	6
9	7	1	3	6	2	4	8	5
1	8	6	9	4	3	2	5	7
2	3	7	1	8	5	9	6	4
4	5	9	2	7	6	8	1	3

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

I LOVE TO WALK — Solution: 9 letters

H	I	L	L	S	H	B	G	L	E	I	S	U	R	E
S	E	A	U	P	I	L	U	V	S	D	O	O	W	C
E	R	C	M	R	A	M	I	S	S	R	U	O	Y	O
R	O	A	D	I	O	T	D	S	P	T	B	R	M	T
F	C	S	C	O	I	T	E	A	E	N	E	O	E	T
N	K	O	D	S	O	N	T	P	I	N	D	P	N	A
O	S	C	O	E	T	H	B	A	E	E	I	A	E	G
I	E	P	A	I	N	L	R	C	L	Ⓜ	R	R	R	E
T	K	K	F	R	O	I	S	O	A	Ⓐ	T	A	G	T
A	A	R	S	C	T	T	H	R	B	Ⓟ	S	D	Y	A
X	E	A	A	I	E	O	A	S	L	H	I	E	H	G
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Clarkson, Jazz win showdown vs Simmons, 76ers

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Even without Joel Embiid, the Philadelphia 76ers were scoring every time down the court.

But the Utah Jazz didn't blink. They just gave the ball to Jordan Clarkson.

Clarkson had a season-high 40 points off the bench to send the streaking Jazz past Philadelphia 134-123 in a matchup of conference leaders Monday night despite a career-best 42 points from Ben Simmons.

"I've never played with anyone like JC in my lifetime," teammate Joe Ingles said. "It's pretty cool to play with someone that's so locked into what his role is and so comfortable in the role."

Utah (23-5) has won eight straight games and 19 of 20. Clarkson has been a sparkplug in several of those victories.

A leading candidate for NBA Sixth Man of the Year already, Clarkson knows his role is to score—and there aren't many shots he'll turn down. Nicknamed the Flame Thrower, Clarkson was so hot he didn't want to come off the court.

"What Jordan did tonight was special," Utah coach Quin Snyder said. "He and I just laughed about me telling him that I appreciate him at least hiding (his disappointment) when he comes out."

Clarkson hit a career-high eight 3-pointers and Donovan Mitchell added 24 points to help the Jazz overcome an early 14-point deficit.

Clarkson set his career scoring high for a game that ended in regulation. He had 42 points in a three-overtime loss to Brooklyn on Feb. 13, 2019.

"With them saying they believe me, letting me be myself and embracing me, it plays into the whole role of who I am and that gives me even more confidence," Clarkson said.

Philadelphia (18-10) was minus Embiid, a late scratch because of back tightness. Playing without his All-Star running mate, Simmons had 12 assists and nine rebounds—barely missing a triple-double. He easily topped his previous best of 34 points set on Dec. 7, 2019.

"Honestly, I've been working on my mentality and my mental (approach) a lot these past few weeks," Simmons said of his newfound scoring prowess. "It's not easy to do that, change the way you play. Certain things in the game come natural to certain people. I feel like I'm figuring it out."

Wizards 131, Rockets 119

In Washington, Bradley Beal scored 37 points in an entertaining matchup with ex-teammate John Wall, and the Wizards beat the undermanned Rockets.

Wall, traded in December for Russell Westbrook and a first-round pick, had season highs of 29 points and 11 assists for the Rockets, who were missing leading scorer Eric Gordon along with Victor Oladipo, Christian Wood and P.J. Tucker. Houston dropped its sixth straight.

Westbrook had 16 points, 15 assists and 13 rebounds for his sixth triple-double of the season—his first in a Wizards win—and 152nd of his career.

Nets 136, Kings 125

In Sacramento, Kyrie Irving scored a season-high 40 points, James Harden had his fifth triple-double with Brooklyn and the Nets beat the Kings as injured Kevin Durant watched from the bench.

Irving went 15 of 22 and made nine of the Nets' franchise-record 27 3-pointers. Harden had 29 points, 14 assists and 13 rebounds, his ninth straight game with a double-double. The club record is 10.

Knicks 123, Hawks 112

In New York, Julius Randle scored a season-high 44 points, making a career-best seven 3-pointers and leading the Knicks past Atlanta for their third straight victory.

Randle added nine rebounds and five assists, finishing one point shy of his career high.

RJ Barrett added 21 points and rookie Immanuel Quickley had 16 for the Knicks.

Trae Young had 23 points and eight assists for the Hawks, who dropped their fourth straight and seventh in the last eight games.

Bulls 120, Pacers 112, OT

In Indianapolis, Zach LaVine scored 12 of his 30 points in the fourth quarter to help Chicago force overtime, and the Bulls then pulled away from Indiana.

Chicago had lost 10 straight against Indiana and eight straight on the road in the series.

Domantas Sabonis scored 25 points and Malcolm Brogdon had 23 for the Pacers, who had won two in a row.

Utah Jazz guard Jordan Clarkson (00) scores against Philadelphia 76ers center Dwight Howard in the second half during an NBA game Monday, Feb. 15, 2021, in Salt Lake City. AP

Warriors 129, Cavaliers 98

In San Francisco, Stephen Curry scored 36 points in three quarters and Golden State routed Cleveland.

Draymond Green tied his career high with 16 assists as the Warriors sent the Cavaliers to their eighth straight loss.

Collin Sexton led the Cavaliers with 23 points. Cleveland shot 38.9% from the floor and was winless on its five-game road trip.

Clippers 125, Heat 118

In Los Angeles, Marcus Morris had season highs of 32 points and six 3-pointers, and the Clippers beat Miami for their fourth straight victory.

The Clippers won without Kawhi Leonard and Paul George, who were out for the second straight night because of injuries. The Clippers have won eight of 11.

Jimmy Butler had 30 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for the Heat. Bam Adebayo added 27 points and 12 rebounds, and reserve Tyler Herro scored 27 points.

Ivica Zubac added 22 points for the Clippers. Lou Williams had 18 points and 10 assists, and two-way player Amir Coffey had a season-high 15 points and a career-high five 3-pointers.

Pistons holding out Griffin amid trade, buyout consideration

DETROIT (AP)—The Detroit Pistons are taking another step in their rebuilding process, planning to part ways with Blake Griffin.

Detroit plans to keep the star forward out of the lineup while he and the organization work out a decision on his future, a clear sign his days with the team could be numbered.

"After extensive conversation with Blake's representatives, it has been determined that we will begin working to facilitate a resolution regarding his future with the team that maximizes the interests of both parties," Pistons general manager Troy Weaver said in a statement Monday. "We respect all the effort Blake has put forth in Detroit and his career and will work to achieve a positive outcome for all involved."

Griffin, who turns 32 next month, came to Detroit in a trade during the 2017-18 season as part of the franchise's push to become relevant again.

The Pistons, though, have made only one postseason appearance with him and have spent much of the last year overhauling their roster in earnest. Detroit is 8-19 this season, and Griffin has already missed seven games.

"It's a situation where we're rebuilding and retooling and we have to give those minutes to guys like Saddiq (Bey)," coach Dwane Casey said.

If Griffin is traded or leaves via a buyout, it could give the popular veteran a chance to play more meaningful games than what Detroit can offer this season.

"I am grateful to the Pistons for understanding what I want to accomplish in my career and for working together on the best path forward," Griffin said.

Griffin stayed mostly healthy during a terrific 2018-19 season and averaged a career-high 24.5 points, but he missed two of the four games when Detroit was swept in the first round of the playoffs.

"He carried us that entire year," Casey said. "He had a career, stats year. He's a stand-up guy. He will be in the Hall of Fame someday."

Griffin, who had knee surgery last year, played just 18 games last season.

Griffin was one of few holdovers on the roster when this season began, and the Pistons recently traded one of them when they sent Derrick Rose to the New York Knicks. Bey and Isaiah Stewart, both rookies, have contributed enough to give fans some reason for optimism. Jerami Grant has also been a good addition, averaging 23 points per game in his first season after coming to Detroit from Denver.

Bey was named NBA Eastern Conference Player of the Week on Monday after averaging nearly 18 points while helping the Pistons win three of four games. Bey is the second first-year player to win the award for the franchise, joining Kelly Tripucka, who did it in March 14, 1982.

With so many new faces, Griffin has been an afterthought at times, averaging 12.3 points—a career low—but Casey is convinced he can help a lot of NBA teams.

"He can be a piece with a contending team," he said.

Osaka eases way to Aussie Open semis

MELBOURNE—Naomi Osaka may have survived a scare in her fourth round match in Melbourne, but one wouldn't have known it on Tuesday.

Osaka cruised to a quick win over Taiwan's Hsieh Su-wei in straight sets, 6-2, 6-2, in her quarterfinal matchup at Rod Laver Arena at the Australian Open.

Osaka, the world No. 3, split her first two sets with Hsieh before going on a quick three game run—which she solidified with an ace after getting into a tight battle with Hsieh at the end of the fifth game—to take a 4-1 lead in the first set. From there, she quickly pushed to take the 6-2 win and win the first set.

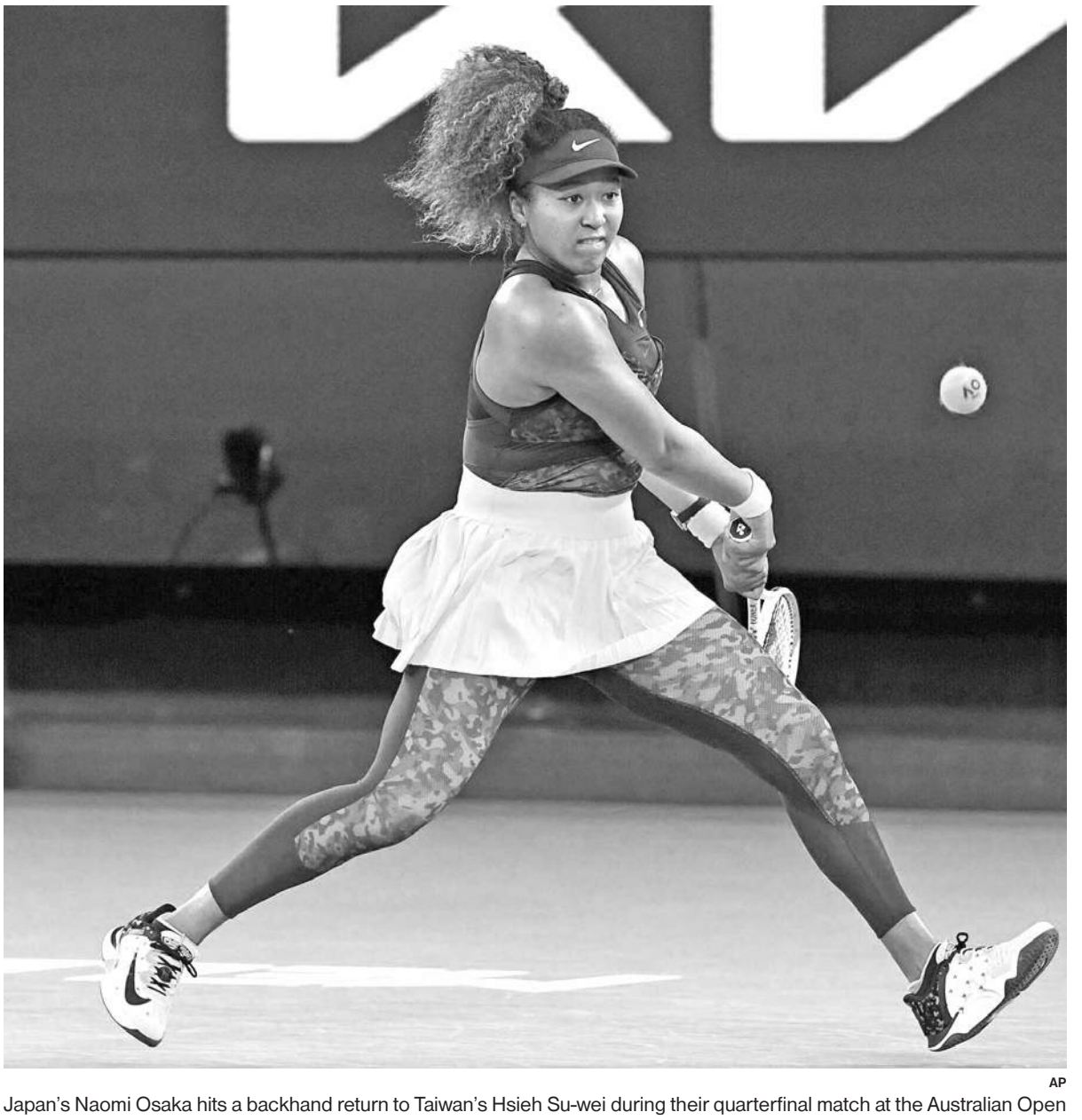
With the momentum in hand, Osaka rolled to a quick 3-0 lead in the second set with ease while giving up just four points. Though Hsieh grabbed an easy win in the fourth game, and another in the sixth, it was too late. Osaka wrapped up the set almost instantly to finish the match in just more than an hour.

Though Hsieh's first run to a Grand Slam singles quarterfinals was beyond entertaining—aside from her viral interviews, the 35-year-old knocked off Bianca Andreescu and Marketa Vondrousova—she simply couldn't put up much of a fight against Osaka on Tuesday.

Osaka cruised through her first three rounds of the event with ease, and beat No. 27 Ons Jabeur of Tunisia in straight sets to reach the fourth round. Osaka then survived a fight with Spain's Garbiñe Muguruza, who won the first set of that match 6-4—the first set Osaka had dropped in five matches.

The 23-year-old, though, quickly bounced back and rallied out of a deep hole in the final set— including surviving a pair of match points—to top Muguruza and reach the semifinals.

With the win on Tuesday, Osaka will take on the winner of Serena Williams' matchup with Romania's Simona Halep in the semifinals on Thursday—something she will definitely be paying attention to.



AP

Japan's Naomi Osaka hits a backhand return to Taiwan's Hsieh Su-wei during their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2021.

Meanwhile, Aslan Karatsev never had managed to make it into the main draw of a Grand Slam tournament. Now he just refuses to leave the Australian Open.

Karatsev, a 27-year-old Russian qualifier who is ranked 114th, became the first man in the professional era to reach the semifinals of his first major tennis tournament by beating 18th-seeded Grigor Dimitrov 2-6, 6-4, 6-1, 6-2 on Tuesday.

"It's an unbelievable feeling," Karatsev said. "Of course, it's first time. First time in main draw; first time semis. It's incredible."

That's a pretty good word for what he has managed to do. Karatsev failed in nine previous attempts to go through qualifying rounds to play at a Grand Slam tournament.

Now he's making the most of it, getting past Dimitrov—a three-time major semifinalist—after also eliminating two other seeded players, No. 8 Diego Schwartzman and No. 20 Felix Auger-Aliassime.

"It's great to see. I think it's great to see," Dimitrov said about Karatsev's success. "Surprised? No."

Bothered by back spams that developed Monday, Dimitrov was not at his best. He finished the match barely able to serve—and barely able to walk up the stairs as he departed Rod Laver Arena.

Dimitrov jumped out to an early lead with three service breaks in the first set. He then held seven break points in Karatsev's first two service games in the second set, but didn't convert any of them.

That's when Karatsev started to believe he could stretch his already remarkable run even further.

"It was really tough in the beginning for me to hold my nerves," Karatsev said. "It was tricky. I tried to play in the second set, to find a way how to play."

Dimitrov stopped chasing shots in the third set, then was visited by a trainer and took a medical timeout for treatment on a muscle problem around his lower back.

He hadn't dropped a set in his first four matches here but said he had trouble putting his socks on before the match.

"It started yesterday," Dimitrov said, "out of the blue."

Karatsev is the lowest-ranked man to reach the Australian Open semifinals since Patrick McEnroe—John's brother—also was No. 114 in 1991—and the lowest-ranked man to reach the semifinals at any Slam since Goran Ivanisevic was No. 125 at 2001 Wimbledon.

Karatsev will play either eight-time champion Novak Djokovic or Alexander Zverev next. Russians Daniil Medvedev and Andrey Rublev are meeting in a quarterfinal on the other half of the draw on Wednesday, meaning there'll be two Russians in the semifinals at Melbourne Park.

Asked for his thoughts on the possibility of an all-Russian final, Karatsev stuck with what he knows.

"I try not to think about it," he said, adding that he simply is "going from match to match." ***(AP/NBC)***

Players can reveal or hide injuries

MELBOURNE (AP)—Novak Djokovic came clean, or so it seemed, right after his third-round victory at the Australian Open, about pain in his midsection after an awkward, torso-twisting slip.

Asked that night about being ready for his next match, Djokovic replied: "I know it's a tear, definitely, of the muscle. ... I don't know if I'm going to step out onto the court or not."

Narrator: He did. And not only was the 17-time major champion back in Rod Laver Arena two days later—he played well enough with that bothersome and bandaged abdominal to reach the quarterfinals. This time, when reporters inquired, Djokovic clammed up.

"I know what it is," said Djokovic, who plays Alexander Zverev on Tuesday, "but I don't want to talk about it now."

Unlike in certain team sports—think of the NFL's "doubtful" or "questionable" designations accompanied by listings of specific body parts in a nod to gamblers, rather than the "upper body" or "lower body" vagueness often used in the NHL—Grand Slam tennis leaves it up to individual players to decide whether to disclose or discuss injuries before they compete.

Some are more forthcoming than others. Some go back and forth.

"Depends what you have," 2019 U.S. Open finalist Daniil Medvedev said.

It's a big deal in a sport where fitness is key and it's not unusual to see players stop mid-match or not show up at all because of injuries. There was one example of each Monday, when Casper Ruud retired after the second set against Andrey Rublev, and Matteo Berrettini gave Stefanos Tsitsipas a walkover.

While players and coaches are not required to reveal anything to the media, Grand Slam rules dictate that anyone withdrawing before a singles match, or quitting during one, must be seen by a tournament doctor.

That way, whatever reason was cited can be verified before prize money is paid.

There are those who play it coy, lest an upcoming foe glean some sort of competitive advantage. And there are those who insist they wouldn't do that.

"It's difficult to hide things," said Rafael Nadal, who had to reveal he was dealing with a bad back when he pulled out of another event recently. "I mean, even if you want to hide, at some point you're going to have questions to answer. I don't want to play that game, honestly."

Perhaps. But during the 2016 French Open, Nadal kept a bad left wrist secret until he suddenly showed up with a blue brace for a news conference and announced he was out of the tournament.

Serena Williams made surprise exits from Roland Garros before matches in 2018 (pectoral muscle) and last year (Achilles tendon), citing injuries she had avoided discussing. On Sunday at the Australian Open, she casually made a passing reference to the Achilles having "been a problem since 2018," which was news to most everyone.

Nadal and Williams are among the players who tend to avoid blaming defeat on injury, lest they sound like someone withholding credit from the winner.

When reigning U.S. Open champion Dominic Thiem appeared to be hampered during a straight-set setback against Grigor Dimitrov in Melbourne, he chalked it up to a combination of having "some little physical issues, plus a real bad day, plus the fact that, well, he's a great player," but never offered any specifics.

Williams' coach, Patrick Mouratoglou, would rather just hear what really was going on.

"A lot of players, after losing, they want to look gracious, so they say, 'Oh, no, I'm fine.' They're clearly not fine," Mouratoglou said. "It's just to look good."

After Victoria Azarenka appeared to have difficulty breathing during a loss to American Jessica Pegula last week, the two-time Australian Open champion objected to a reporter's question about whether she was sick.

"I don't really know why we're getting asked about some, like, medical conditions (of) players, because all this is going out on the internet after, for people to talk about, to judge about," Azarenka said. "It shouldn't be a mandatory requirement for people to talk about their health issues."

It's not, of course, but Djokovic agreed with her general premise, saying he doesn't "feel comfortable" talking about such matters.

Then again, he was the one who fueled the conversation about his status in Australia by telling the world he had a torn muscle.

With Turner and Bauer in, Dodgers face luxury tax bill

LOS ANGELES—At a time when teams across the majors, from mammoth to tiny markets, have refused to add substantial payroll, the Dodgers zagged with their recent spending spree.

They're not the only team to swerve off the mainstream. The San Diego Padres, located down the road in one of the smallest media markets in the majors, bucked the groupthink and added significant payroll. A few other teams were willing to spend significant money—the Toronto Blue Jays and New York Mets were aggressive all winter—but that's now considered an anomaly.

The new market inefficiency is spending money on talent, and there isn't an organization spending more money on players than the Dodgers.

Adding to their already substantial payroll this winter wasn't a certainty at the beginning of the offseason, when the Dodgers joined most other franchises in announcing layoffs across the organization. The club didn't disclose the number of people affected, but nearly 50 employees were dismissed, according to people with knowledge of the situation.

Then, over the next two months, the club's biggest expense was re-signing reliever Blake Treinen to a two-year, $17.5-million contract. Meanwhile, key contributors Pedro Báez, Kiké Hernández and Joc Pederson signed with other teams as free agents.

That changed two days before the Super Bowl when the Dodgers and Trevor Bauer agreed on a three-year, $102-million contract, making Bauer the highest-paid player in the majors in 2021 and again in 2022 if he doesn't opt out next winter. Eight days later, on Saturday, the Dodgers and Justin Turner came to terms on a two-year, $34-million deal to bring back the third baseman.

The Dodgers were pushing up against the $210-million competitive balance tax threshold before the moves. While their 29 peers treated the line as a salary cap, the Dodgers rocketed past $210 million.

AP
In this Sept. 30, 2020 file photo, Cincinnati Reds starting pitcher Trevor Bauer (27) delivers in the first inning against the Atlanta Braves during Game 1 of a National League wild-card series, Wednesday, in Atlanta.

The team's precise CBT payroll is unclear. The information available to the public can be incomplete. In this case, the two leading websites for this data—Roster Resource and Cot's— have slightly different numbers.

Roster Resource estimates the Dodgers' CBT payroll is approximately $257.4 million. The Cot's calculation is about $254.4 million. Those estimates include the two-year, $4.3 million contract Austin Barnes agreed to sign Sunday.

The Boston Red Sox are second in the majors in CBT payroll, about $50 million behind the Dodgers, as clubs point to significant losses in revenue from a pandemic-shortened 2020 season played without fans.

The difference between the websites' totals doesn't change the fact that the Dodgers are projected to face the stiffest tax penalties if they don't shed payroll.

As of Sunday, the Dodgers would be charged a 20% tax on overages up to $20 million, another 12% on overages between $20 million and $40 million, and a 42.5% tax rate on all the overages beyond that. The top tax bracket also calls for them to have their first pick in the next draft fall 10 slots.

It's the territory nearly every other major league franchise has worked to avoid. One would think the penalties are massive. But they aren't, at least not in relation to the money teams spend.

Based on a Roster Resource estimate, the slightly more expensive of the two, the Dodgers' tax bill as first-time offenders would be about $13.3 million. That's about 5% of the projected payroll.

The breakdown: $4 million in taxes for the first $20 million over $210 million, $6.4 million in taxes for the next $20 million, and $2.9 million in taxes for being over $250 million in payroll. In total, the Dodgers' CBT payroll and taxes would be about $270.2 million.

The Dodgers could make moves to dip under $250 million by the end of the season and avoid the stiffest penalties. But, in reality, even the steepest taxes aren't that harsh compared to the money already spent. One could argue the draft pick change is the costliest penalty.

And yet the Dodgers are seemingly the only club willing to venture into tax territory in 2021. They're spending money to win. Very few other teams can say the same.

KANG

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Wataru Kadokura and Bishop Ryan Jimenez, 6-3, 1-6, 10-8.

The semis and finals will be played this weekend along with the title games in the men's and women's singles, boys and girls U12 and U14 singles, boys U16 singles, co-ed U10, and the men's over 40 singles.

The men's over 40 singles championship will be a battle between the Top 2 seeds, as No. 1 Peter Loken prevailed against Dong Min in the first semis game last Sunday, 6-0, 6-2, and No. 2 Tomas Abel won over Eric Abragan in the second semis tiff, 6-1, 6-1.

In the women's singles, Serin Chung notched the first finals berth after downing Elizabeth Culp, 6-2, 6-2. Serin will meet in the title game the winner in the semis duel between Hye Jin Elliot and Grace Choi, who reached the Final Four following an 8-5 win over Yuko Kumada.

In the girls U12 singles, Isa Nishitani and Hannah Chae will battle for the division title. Nishitani advanced to the finals after stunning No. 1 seed Lina Tsukagoshi, 6-3, 6-3, while Chae marched on following her 6-2, 6-2 triumph over Anne Lee.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Edwin Simbulan returns to Irin Chung and Daniel Kang during the mixed-up doubles game in the 2021 White Coconut Tennis Classic last Monday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

EKIDEN

From Page 20

waiting for him so they can finish the race together at Micro Beach.

Ekiden 5 completed the relay more than four three minutes ahead of Ekiden 10 (1:36:51), which had CNMI national youth team soccer players Dev Bachani, Markus Toves, Jerald Aquino, and Dylan Mister as members. Rounding out the Top 3 was Ekiden 4 (1:37:47) of Kerri Baeur, Anastasia Dela Cruz, Travis Spaeth, and Shuji Kuroda.

Meanwhile, four runners ran the 21K course solo with Dela Cruz Jr. posting the fastest time with his 1:45:52. Dela Cruz, who conducted the race briefing virtually, did the solo run last Friday and then worked with Ekiden 2 (with Erick Bauer, Josh Joson, and Shiela Isla) last Sunday to post the fifth best time (1:46:46) in the relay.

Ronald Villafria also broke the two-hour barrier in his solo run last Sunday after posting 1:54:51, while Malou Carlos and Manny Sitchon clocked in at 2:18:36 and 2:29:38, respectively, last Monday and Sunday.

In the 5K split time, Kuroda recorded the best mark at 18:22 and was followed by Dela Cruz (20:90) and Toves (21:05). In the women's division, Jim had the fastest 5K split with her 21:34, while Akiko Miller of Ekiden 11 and Kaithlyn Chavez of Ekiden 9 were ranked second and third after posting 22:08 and 21:23.

Ekiden 4 runners head to the finish line. ROSELYN B. MONROYO

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Dylan Mister leads Ekiden 10 runners to the finish line of last Sunday's 2021 Hafa Half Marathon Virtual Marissa Run's Ekiden Relay Saipan Edition.

Clarkson, Jazz win showdown vs Simmons, 76ers

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Ekiden 5 rules virtual race

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Ekiden 5 emerged as the top finisher in the 2021 Hafa Half Marathon Virtual Marissa Run's Ekiden Relay Saipan Edition held last Sunday.

The quartet of Michiteru Mita, Taro Goto, Noriko Jim, and Hiramitsu Ono made up Ekiden 5 and they timed in at 1:33:03 in the 21K race from Micro Beach to Pacific Islands Club and back. Ekiden 5 finished ahead of 10 other teams in the virtual event that runner Edward Dela Cruz organized in support of Guam Running Club's signature competition, which this year was held in memory of its late member, Marissa David Peroy.

In following the Ekiden relay rules for the virtual race, each runner took five kilometers of the course, while all members ran the last one kilometer. Ono started the race for Ekiden with his 5K run ending across the CNMI Army Recruiting Center in Ladera Center in Beach Road. Mita took over and ran as far as the San Antonio Basketball Court to hand the "tasuki" (cloth sash) to Jim, who completed her 5K journey across the Oleai Sports Complex Field. For the last 5K, Goto ran all the way to Joeten Garapan where Mita, Jim, and Hiramitsu were

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

From left, Taro Goto, Noriko Jim, Hiramitsu Ono, and Michitetu Mita celebrate as they near the finish line at Micro Beach during last Sunday's 2021 Hafa Half Marathon Virtual Marissa Run's Ekiden Relay Saipan Edition.

Kang, Chung avoid upset axe

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The No. 1 seeded pair of Daniel Kang and Irin Chung averted elimination from the mixed-up doubles event in the 2021 White Coconut Tennis Classic after surviving a super-tiebreaker third set in the quarterfinals last Monday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Kang and Chung dropped the opening set of their game against No. 5 seed Cody Shimizu and Edwin Simbulan, 5-7, but avoided the latter's upset axe after bouncing back in the second set, 6-2. With the match even, the opposing teams had to play in a supertiebreaker third set and Kang and Chung rode on the momentum of their second set victory to pull off an 11-9 triumph over Simbulan and Shimizu.

With the come-from-behind win, Kang and Chung took one of the two semis seats at the upper half of the draw. The No. 1 seed earlier swept Ian Chae and Lydia Tan, 6-3, 7-5, and Dev Bachani and Grace Choi, 6-3, 7-6, to set up a semis duel against Shimizu and Simbulan.

Kang and Chung's semifinals foes will be No. 6 seed Min Seoung Kim and Sean Lee, who recorded all three victories at the top half of the draw via straight sets. Kim and Lee clinched a semis ticket after ousting No. 12 Si Woo Lee and Andy Kim, 6-4, 6-4. Min Seoung and Sean's two other victories were against Quintin Ramsey and Ji Jun Park, 6-2, 6-3, and Mat Murphy and Anna Kwon, 6-3, 6-4.

In the other semis pairing in the mixed-up doubles event, it will be No. 2 seed Dong Min Lee and Hoo Wang against No. 3 Simon Tang and Sam Ryu. The two pairs labored past their respective quarterfinals opponents with Dong Min and Wang eking out a 4-6, 6-1, 11-9 win over No. 8 Jun Yu and Gerald Boyer and Tang and Ryu outlasting No. 7

See KANG on Page 19

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Irin Chung, left, serves during her and Daniel Kang's mixed-up doubles game against Cody Shimizu and Edwin Simbulan in the 2021 White Coconut Tennis Classic last Monday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.